Palmtop

The journal for today's Psion user

Issue 19

Bimonthly

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symbian

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www.palmtop.co.uk

Submissions

Any contributions of material published within the pages of *PALMTOP* (excluding 'On The Net') will earn the author a minimum of one free issue added to their subscription. If you wish to write feature articles for the magazine then please contact the editor to discuss your ideas.

Back Issues

All issues are available at £4 each in the UK, £4.50 in Europe, and £5.50 elsewhere. All prices include postage. Just send payment in the usual way, stating which issues you require.

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General

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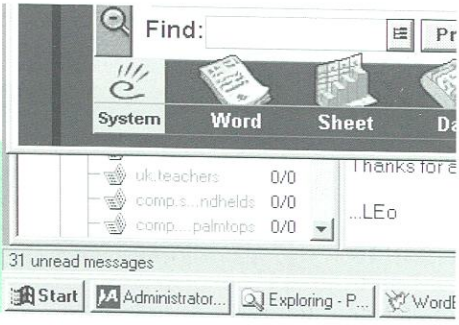
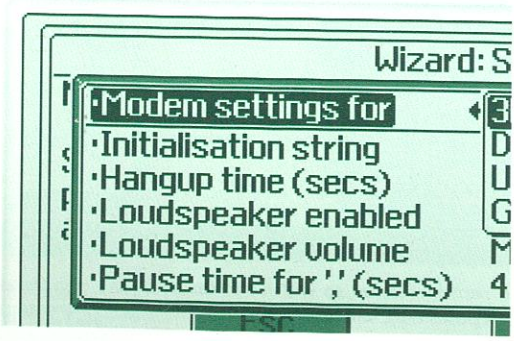


Series 5 EMULATOR—the facts



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Editorial

Hopefully by the time you get around to reading this editorial, you will already have flicked through the magazine to take in all the changes since the last issue.

We're constantly striving to give *Palmtop* a more professional feel, and have always taken the first issue of each new volume as an opportunity to give ourselves a fairly major facelift. This time around we've moved to a more condensed typeface throughout the magazine, designed to allow more than 15% more content without compromising readability.

As well as some more subtle changes to the layout you'll also notice the addition of colour on every page, which serves to further embellish the whole magazine.

The most important changes, though, have come from our first ever 'mass' questionnaire, mailed out to everyone who was due to resubscribe at the last issue. From the many hundreds of responses we've had lots of useful suggestions, a number of which we've already incorporated into this issue.

Without going into endless detail, here are some of the highlights of what you told us:

- You wanted more hints and tips, more reviews, more news, more tutorials, more shareware coverage and, most overwhelmingly, more on connectivity, hooking up to the Internet, faxing and mobile communications.

- Least popular items were (apart from the fact that *Palmtop* isn't a *monthly* magazine): coverage of whichever Psion machine *you* don't personally own (a roughly equal bias between Series 3a/3c and Series 5 owners), too much space devoted to carrying cases and other paraphernalia, feature articles that span many issues, and a general feeling that reference information such as the Software Directory should either be condensed, or rotated between issues.

As you'll see from this issue our first steps have been to expand the news, Shareware Shorts and reviews section (with even more reviews planned from issue 20 onwards), using the expanded news section as an area to discuss the release of new peripherals in preference to giving them full product reviews. The Software Directory has been replaced by different reference information for this issue, with something different again planned for issue 20. We have also condensed 'On The Net' and the 'Introduction to shareware', and are endeavouring to lengthen each instalment of serialised articles (within reason) so that they can usually be concluded within no more than two or three parts.

We're so thrilled by the direction this feedback is giving us that we'll be including questionnaires with all resubscription forms in future, and will be customising the questions to closely monitor the success of all the improvements we're making.

Finally, thanks to all of *you* who took the time to return the forms, helping us to develop this magazine in the ways *you* want.

Psion...Symbian

Most of you will already have read of Psion's new Symbian venture in the popular press, or

you can find out more from the news section in this issue. The question is, what does it all mean for the average Psion user?

Firstly, the software division of Psion (that's *Psion Software*, of course) is no more. It has now been transformed into *Symbian*, with Psion currently owning 40%, and Ericsson and Nokia 30% each. Motorola, the US electronics giant, has also committed to join Symbian in the future.

Secondly, it's widely accepted that the features and general functionality of palmtop computers and mobile telephones (and other wireless communication devices) will overlap and eventually merge. Nokia already built 'PIM' functions into their 9000 Communicator a couple of years back, and the integration of wireless communications into Psion (and other) palmtops is inevitable.

Symbian will attempt to supply the huge projected market for these devices by developing software for a whole range of machines from enhanced cellular telephones through to the most sophisticated multi-function mobile computers/communicators. It's important to emphasise that EPOC is being pitched as an emerging *global* standard for these devices, and with three of the major players in the telecommunications arena behind it the chances of success seem high.

The key to such widespread adoption is of course the flexible and scalable nature of Psion's EPOC. The attraction to Nokia, Ericsson and Motorola is also that the user interface can be customised to the requirements of each company's products. What they are primarily concerned with is the robustness and extensibility of the underlying operating system—a testimony to the power of EPOC.

So does this mean that we'll see Nokia communicators running Series 5 WORD and SHEET? Probably not, at least not in a recognisable form. Remember that the entire interface (the menus, keyboard shortcuts and overall appearance of each software application) is customisable. On the Series 5 it uses a 'front end' known as 'EIKON', but broadly similar applications running on non-Psion devices will most certainly be using each company's own user interface, so the appearance may not be recognisable as something originally developed by Psion.

Regardless of what form these EPOC-driven devices may take, the prospect of implementing Psion's core technology into millions of handheld devices is strategically significant. The injection of funds from such large and prominent industry names is good news for both the development of EPOC and the financial stability and long-term profitability of Psion's software arm. Perhaps, above all, it increases the profile of the company as a whole and bolsters Psion's credibility with the world.

In the few weeks following the announcement on 24th June, Psion stock more than tripled in value.

Steve Clack - August 1998

Palmtop is...

Steve Clack - Publishing Editor

Pete Sipple - Contributing Editor

Steve Litchfield - Contributing Editor

Leigh Edwards - Technical Consultant

Rosemary Rolfe - Distribution Manager

Thanks... to all the contributors whose names appear within the magazine. Thanks also to all those who have kindly supplied their products for evaluation.

Newsreel

What's new in the Psion world...

symbian

Symbian takes form

On 24th June it was announced that Ericsson, Nokia and Psion have conditionally agreed to form a new joint venture called Symbian. Motorola have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to join Symbian.

With the global mobile telephone market projected to grow to more than 600 million users by 2002, Symbian aims to become a major player.

Symbian will seek to drive the convergence of mobile computing and wireless technology, enabling Internet access, messaging and information access, all within handheld machines.

Psion will own 40% of Symbian, with Ericsson and Nokia each owning 30%. Its new investors will provide additional resources and expertise.

Colly Myers, previously Group Managing Director of the Psion group and newly appointed CEO of Symbian, commented "Symbian is the start of a co-operative approach between the world's leading innovators in the mobile voice and data market. We plan to establish EPOC as the de facto operating system for mobile Wireless Information Devices and further drive innovation and market growth."

Psion's Chairman, David Potter, said "The worlds of mobile computing and mobile communications are converging and this transaction positions Symbian at the forefront of this convergence. Symbian aims to establish Psion's EPOC as an industry standard operating system for wireless information devices. We look forward to other global technology firms joining us as investors in Symbian."

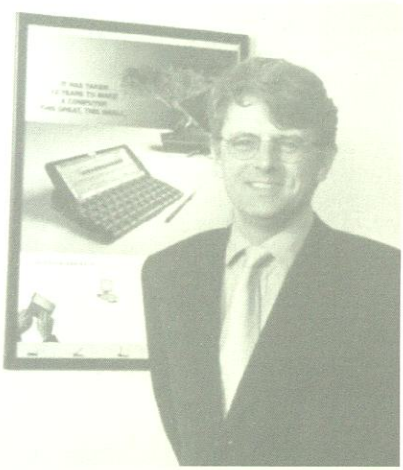
Symbian intends to expand its EPOC licensing, support and development activities, ensuring a clear distinction between ownership of the company and licensing activities. The core focus of the new company will be to license EPOC for a variety of communicators: information-centric products with voice capability, and smartphones: voice-centric devices with information capability.

Colly Myers, CEO of Symbian, continued to say "EPOC offers major advantages to manufacturers who need to remain competitive and work within a market standard while retaining their own product differentiation. From a technical perspective, this is made possible with EPOC's scalability and customisable user interfaces."

Psion Computers gets new MD

Harold Goddijn, former Managing Director of Psion Nederlands BV, has been appointed as Managing Director of Psion Computers PLC.

His appointment follows nine years as head of Psion Nederlands BV, a company he co-founded in August 1989 with Psion PLC to enhance the sales and distribution of Psion products in the Netherlands.



Harold Goddijn, Psion Computers' new Managing Director

Still no sign of S5 ROM v1.1

Psion are still giving no indication as to when the much-awaited Series 5 ROM version 1.1 update is likely to appear. The (expected) major upgrade was originally slated for release in the first half of 1998. Psion declined to comment.

Money 1.2 update

Palmtop BV have announced a free update to their recently-released Money software for the Series 5. The update is downloadable from their web site and will also appear on our own CD04, from number 4 onwards.

www.palmtop.nl

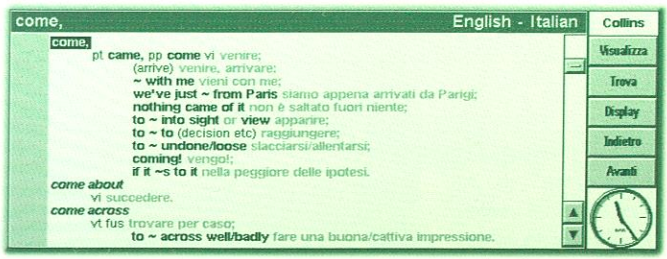
Palmtop BV announce English/Italian dictionary

Palmtop BV is about to expand its range of Collins Dictionaries for the Series 5 with a new English-Italian, Italian-English variant. The dictionary will be priced at £39.95 including VAT, and should be available some-time in August. See issue 16 for reviews of the earlier releases of this product.

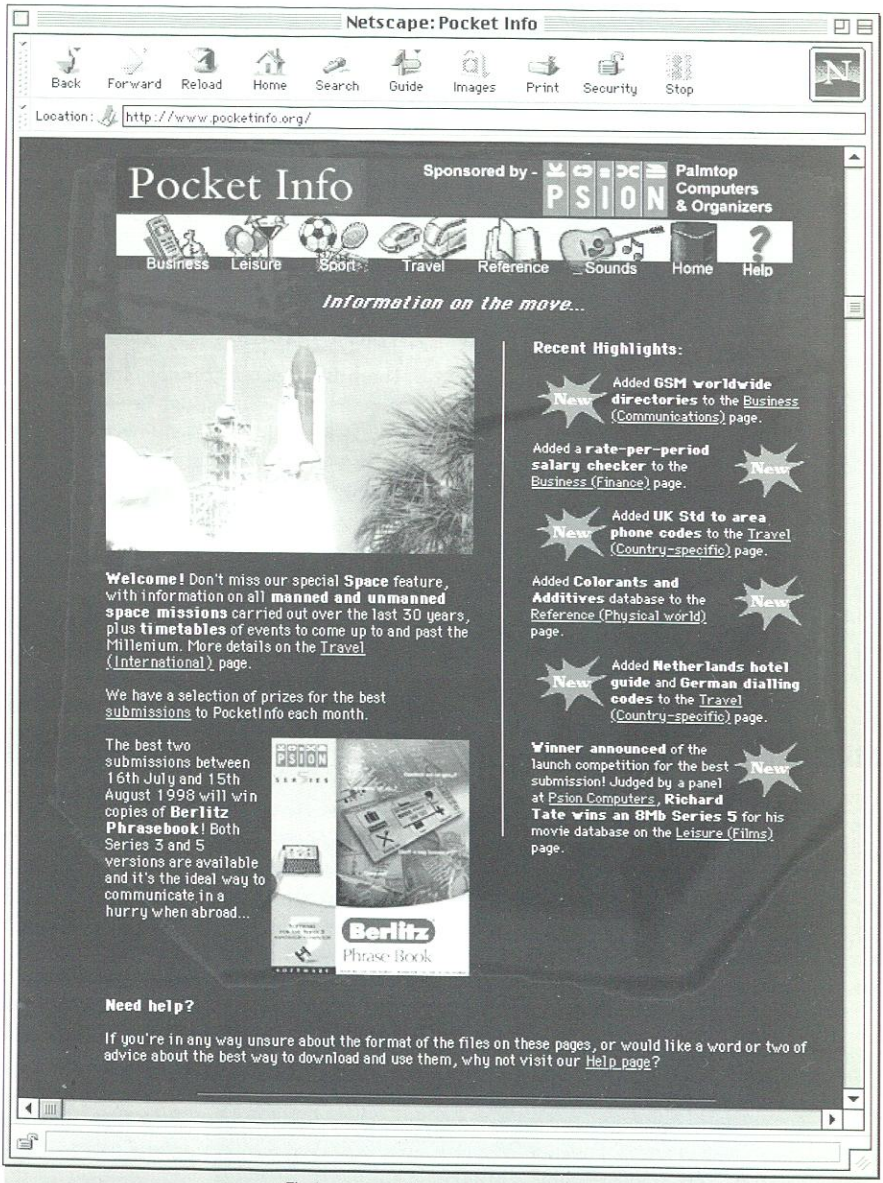
www.palmtop.nl

Series 5 shortlisted for MacRobert award

Psion Computers PLC has been shortlisted for this year's Royal Academy of Engineering MacRobert Award for the development of the Psion Series 5 handheld computer. The four finalists for the £50,000 award were announced at a ceremony on 15th July, when certificates were presented by the President of The Royal Academy of Engineering.



Palmtop BV's latest version of the Collins Dictionary— English-Italian, Italian-English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Guide
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Recent Highlights:
New
Added GSM worldwide directories to the Business (Communications) page.
Added a rate-per-period salary checker to the Business (Finance) page.
Added UK Std to area phone codes to the Travel (Country-specific) page.
Added Colorants and Additives database to the Reference (Physical world) page.
Added Netherlands hotel guide and German dialling codes to the Travel (Country-specific) page.
Welcome! Don't miss our special Space feature, with information on all manned and unmanned space missions carried out over the last 30 years, plus timetables of events to come up to and past the Millenium. More details on the Travel (International) page.
We have a selection of prizes for the best submissions to PocketInfo each month.
The best two submissions between 16th July and 15th August 1998 will win copies of Berlitz Phrasebook! Both Series 3 and 5 versions are available and it's the ideal way to communicate in a hurry when abroad...
PSION
Berlitz
Phrase Book
Winner announced of the launch competition for the best submission! Judged by a panel at Psion Computers, Richard Tate wins an 8Mb Series 5 for his movie database on the Leisure (Films) page.
Need help?
If you're in any way unsure about the format of the files on these pages, or would like a word or two of advice about the best way to download and use them, why not visit our Help page?

The homepage of the new PocketInfo web site

The Royal Academy of Engineering MacRobert Award is Britain's premier prize for engineering. It is given annually for outstanding innovation of benefit to the community and recognises the successful development and exploitation of outstanding advances in engineering.

PocketInfo web site launched

Psion have recently announced their sponsorship of a new information resource for all palmtop computer users, the *PocketInfo* web site. The site contains masses of useful datafiles, reference documents and templates. PocketInfo has a strong bias toward Psion computers and is already becoming a definitive source of useful data. Much of the content of PocketInfo is submitted by users, and includes such things as a database of First Aid information, SHEET templates for share analysis, WORD files with pre-holiday checklists and so on. Everything on the site is free, and there are even competitions to win Psion-related software and other prizes.

www.pocketinfo.org

Waterproof Widget

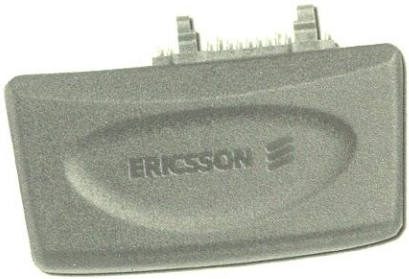
Widget Software are now offering a completely waterproof plastic case, designed to keep a palmtop computer (or similarly-sized items) dry to a depth of 20 metres, and even resistant to salt water—ideal for taking your Psion to the beach or for a swim!

The Aquapac Waterproof Case is available now, at £11.99 including VAT.

Widget Software Ltd.
Tel: 01438 815444

Geofox announce Colorshow Presentation Kit

Geofox have recently announced the availability of the 'Colorshow Presentation Kit', a slideshow viewing system for Psion's *Presentation Maker* software. For full details see 'The Fox's Den' on page 81.



Wireless mobile solutions

Two Series 5/Geofox-friendly connectivity solutions are now available from Ericsson. The SH888 is a compact mobile GSM phone with built-in modem with IrDA compatibility. This allows direct Internet and fax connections without the use of connecting cables.

The DI27 is a tiny plug-in modem with an Infrared 'eye' that gives the same functionality to any Ericsson GSM phone in the 6 or 7 series. As with all current GSM solutions, communication speed is limited to 9600bps.

The DI27 is currently available at a street price of around £120 plus VAT. Pricing for the SH888 varies greatly, dependent upon airtime contracts.

Both products are available from major telecommunications suppliers, e.g. Exportech (see page 110). The DI27 is also available from Clove Technology (see inside front cover).

A more stylish stylus...

The *Rotring Quattro Data Pen* is the most stylish multi-mode stylus-device we have yet seen. The satin black-finished pen contains no less than four tips: a fine-tipped black ball-point, 0.5mm clutch pencil, bright orange fine-tipped highlighter and a non-scratch stylus for your Series 5. The various tips are selectable by rotating the pen horizontally and pressing in the top, then retracted by touching a small button on the pen's pocket clip. The pen is currently available from SP Services at £28.99 including VAT.

Tel: 01703 677916, fax: 01703 322416
email: sphipps@bcs.org.uk

Football crazy

Artamedia have announced a commercial football management simulation for the Series 3a and 3c. Called *Psi Soccer Manager 98*, it offers the opportunity to steer a team of your choice to the English football championship league title. A Series 5 version is in development and should be available soon.

Applying some soccer strategy on your 3a/3c

As soon as it's released we'll be sure to bring you a full review for both palmtops.

Psi Soccer Manager 98 costs £35 including VAT, available direct from Artamedia.

Tel: 0181 553 6322

Handheld Computer Almanac

The second edition of Creative Digital Publishing's *Handheld Computer Almanac* is now available. The 188 page directory covers more than 750 palmtop computer-related companies and 1800 products from around the world.

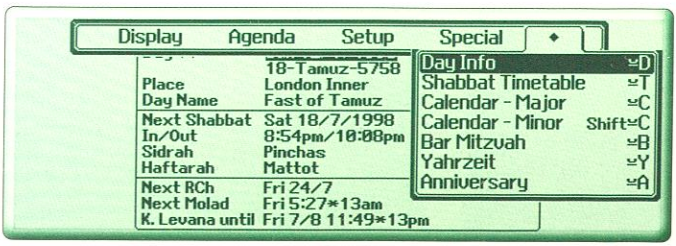
The Almanac costs US$19.95 plus $6 shipping in North America, $10 elsewhere.

Tel: +1 805 788 0138, fax: +1 805 593 3811
hhca@cdpubs.com

Luach launched...

On-Board Info are about to release *Luach*, the Hebrew Calendar program for the Series 3a/3c. Luach offers displays of all festivals and other information found on the Hebrew calendar, can be set for the correct geographical location of the user and for either Israeli or Ashkanazi pronunciation via the Windows 95/NT installation routine. All information can optionally be pasted into the 3a/3c AGENDA. Pricing to be announced.

On-Board Info: 0171 370 0307
www.on-board-info.com

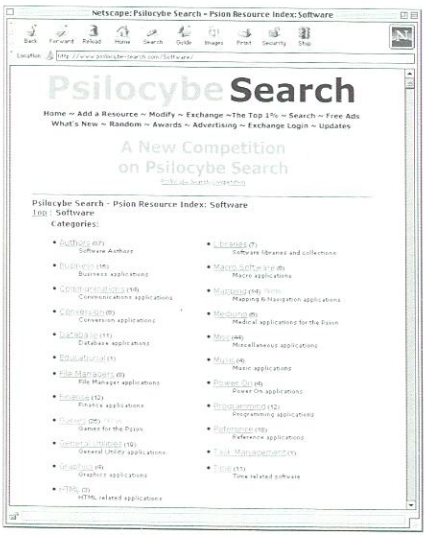


On-Board Info's Hebrew Calendar program

Purple database rumoured...

It's long been known that Purple Software are working on an advanced database program for the Series 5. The new product, *PowerBase*, is now rumoured for release sometime in September. Expect an in-depth review in *Palmtop* as soon as we get a copy of the product for evaluation.

Purple Software Ltd: 0171 3877777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What's New ~ Random ~ Awards ~ Advertising ~ Exchange Login ~ Updates
A New Competition on Psilocybe Search
Psilocybe Search - Psion Resource Index: Software
Top : Software
Categories:

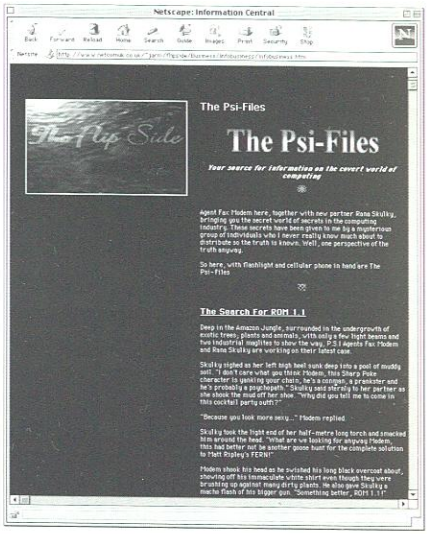
Handy new web site

A useful new web site, *Psilocybe Search*, is now online with listings and hotlinks for major Psion-related software and authors.

www.psilocybe~search.com

And on the lighter side...

For a satirical look at the Psion world, including the latest news bought to you by


Netscape: Information Central
The Psi-Files
The Psi-Files
Your source for information on the covert world of computing
The Search For ROM 1.1

'Agent Fax Modem', take a visit to the *Flipside* web site.

www.netcomuk.co.uk/~jarm/flipside/index.htm

STOP PRESS...

From 31st July 1998, Psion will be offering the 2MB Series 3c bundled together with Scrabble, Expense Tracker, Games Deluxe and PsiWin 1.1, all for £299.95 including VAT—a saving of £150 compared to individual purchases.

This offer runs from 31st July until stocks last and is only available from the John Lewis Partnership.

Also, all Series 5s will come with a free leather case and mains adaptor (worth £49.99), claimed by redeeming a voucher. This offer runs from 28th July to 6th September 1998. Stores participating in this offer are Dixons, PC World, Currys, The Link & Dixons Tax Free.

For further details of stockists, please contact Psion Customer Services on 0990 143050.

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Palmtop address change

Please note that our mailing address has now changed to:

Palmtop Publications
PO Box 188
Bicester DO
Oxfordshire OX6 0GP
ENGLAND

And new email addresses

Please note that our email addresses have changed as follows:

For general information:
info@palmtop.co.uk

For correspondence to the Editor:
editor@palmtop.co.uk

Secure ordering delayed

The secure online ordering system planned for our web site has been delayed due to a few technical hiccups, but should be up and running by early September. Please check our web site for up-to-date announcements on this.

www.palmtop.co.uk

Palmtop INDEX due soon...

After much delay, we will finally be releasing a full index to all back issues of the magazine by the end of August. The index will take the form of DATA files suitable for all Psion machines, and will allow detailed searching by keywords, article names and types.

The index will be regularly updated as each new issue of the magazine is released, will be freely available from our web site and will appear on all CDs from number 4 onwards.

Web expansion planned

In response to feedback from readers we are planning to widen the scope of the existing *Palmtop* web site over the coming months. If there are any additional features or services that *you* would like to see included on our site then please contact us with your suggestions.

Keep us posted!

Please be sure to contact Palmtop if you have any comments on the content of the magazine. As you'll see from the changes in this issue, we take customer feedback very seriously, and there is a good chance that your suggestions may be implemented.

In particular, please tell us which articles you would like to see more (or less) of, ideas for any new material and things you would like to see incorporated into the reference section at the back of the magazine.

Thank you!

ALWAYS USE THE CONTACT DETAILS *ON PAGE 1* FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE!

Shareware Shorts

Steve Litchfield takes a look at the latest additions to the world of Psion shareware...

5-LiB
Palmtop
The journal for today's Psion user
To browse this CD just open START.HTM in your usual web browser. See your latest copy

For the Series 5/Geofox

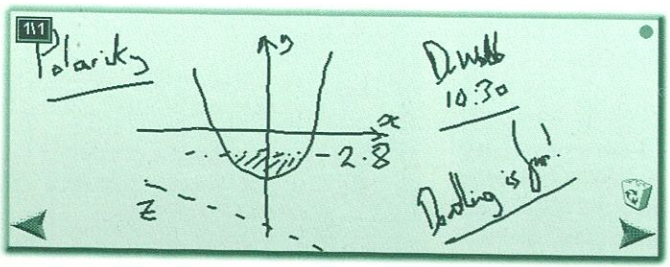
Starting in the 32-bit world, the biggest item to become available in the last two months has of course been the EPOC Emulator, covered in detail elsewhere in this issue. In addition to being downloadable from the Internet, it will also appear on our CD04.

Series 5 scribblers

Two very similar utilities that will help you to discard many of the scraps of paper from your desk are *PenPad* by **Mat Ripley** (CD02 onwards, in `\library\s5util`) and *Scribble* by **Bison Software** (CD04 onwards, in `\library\s5util`). Both take the desktop jotter pad as their metaphor and allow free-form scribbling and text typing on the same page. Pages can be added, moved to quickly and saved (if required) as EPOC picture files for later conversion to SKETCH or a PC graphics file format. A calculator mode allows each to calculate typed-in sums behind the scenes and to output the result on the main jotter screen.

Mapping refinements

The Series 5 version of my own *Psi-Mapper/GB* has recently undergone a radical overhaul. In v6.0 (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5map`) all those fiddly town plan files are now stored in one central repository, and overlays now appear instantaneously and with plain English names (e.g. 'Travel Inns','Local BBC radio stations', etc.)



PenPad: no prizes for neatness, but at least I'm helping to save the rain forests

The new friendly face of Psi-Mapper/GB

Quick and easy resets...

SysBack (CD04 onwards, in `\library\s5util`) is a new freeware utility from **Phil Spencer**. We've all complained after a soft reset when realising that our preferences and settings would have to be established all over again. *SysBack* sends keypresses to the main system screen, saving you the hassle, and in theory you can restore your preferred working environment with one tap of the screen.

More handy utilities

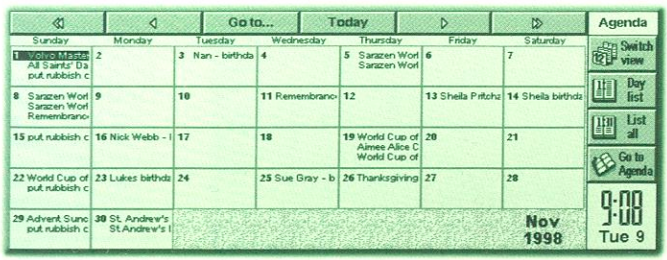
Staying with utilities, here are four more to look out for: *Ferret* (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5util`) is a new file searching utility from **Nutshell**, allowing searching by file name, content, date or size. **Nick Murray's** *Shell5* (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5util`) is a command line interface to the Series 5 file system that also launches many other useful functions. **Lieuwe de Vries**'s *BusyView32* (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5util`) and **Kabestin**'s *MonthMgr* (CD04 onwards, in `\library\s5util`) both provide 'month-at-a-time' views of your AGENDA, with the facility to print out a calendar for yourself.

Help with CiX

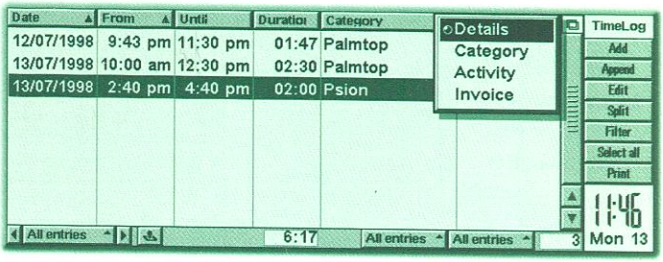
Many Psion owners will have heard of CiX, the UK net service provider and conferencing system that's famous for its Psion coverage. **Mark Fleeming**'s *CixEd* (CD01 onwards, in

Handy files

One handy thing that's available now for 16 and 32-bit Psions is PocketInfo. This is a new, totally free, Internet web site sponsored by Psion which features useful spreadsheets, databases and agenda files. The first category is especially useful, with SHEETs to score darts or 10-pin bowling matches, check your syndicate's lottery numbers or totalise your weekly timesheet. Well worth a look if you're on-line!



A quiet month in BusyView32



Allocating time and effort in TimeLog

`\library\s5misc`) is a freeware offline message system that will save you a lot of money by making sure you're 'online' for the shortest possible time. On the subject of time, *TimeLog* by **Thomas Nemec** (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5misc`) is a time, project and customer management system allowing invoicing and the creation of many different report variations.

Yet more banking software

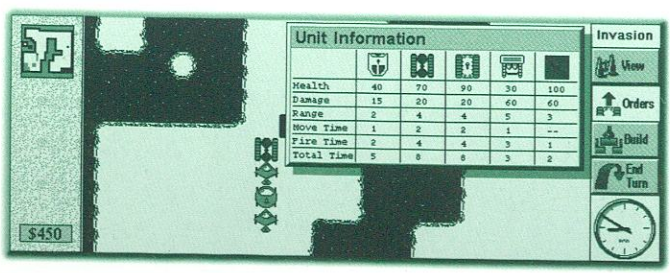
PsiBank, by **A W van der Giessen**, is yet another bank account manager, with all the usual features, available in English, German and Dutch (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5money`). And if issue 18's *'Hi-Tech Hi-Fi Heaven'* feature didn't work out for you, there are custom 'Cabinet' applications to manage your various collections (wine, books, videos, etc.) from **Marc de Oliveira** (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5misc`).

'Directory' improvements

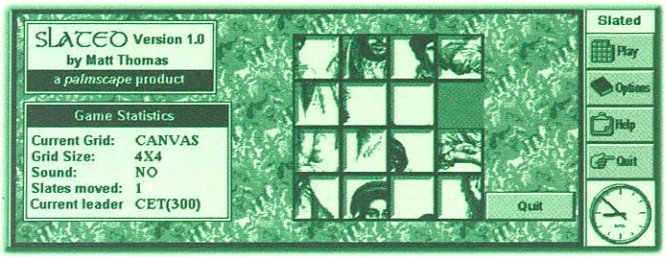
The *UK Pocket Directory* is now under my sole management and has been upgraded to give 30% faster searching and to be 20% smaller. It's a 'yellow pages' style application covering the whole of the UK (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5misc`).

Games galore

Games are perennially one of the most popular program categories amongst Psion owners and this issue is no exception. **Thomas Ashton**'s *Invasion* (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5games`) is a science-fiction-based strategy game in which you build up an army and its infrastructure, occasionally blasting your opponent's units. **Ben Vaughan**, prolific as ever, has released a demo version of *DinoZone* (CD04 onwards, in `\library\s5games`), an arcade and strategy combination in which you guide your hero across monster-infested territory.



Thomas Ashton's 'Invasion'—pacifists beware!



Slated: I'll name that painting in one!

For the intellectuals amongst you, **Kevin Smotherman**'s *WordBox* (CD03 onwards, in `\library\s5games`) is a *Boggle* clone, with the usual grid-based gameplay in which you construct words from adjoining letters against the clock. Finally, **Matt Thomas**'s *Slated* (CD04 onwards, in `\library\s5games`) is a new variation on the old tile-shuffling puzzle game, featuring variable grid sizes and tile patterns.

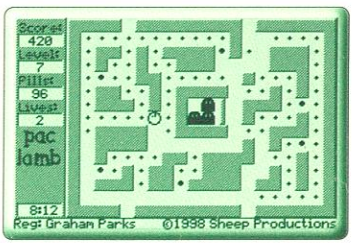
four hungry ghosts. All three are on CD04 onwards, in the `\library\siena` folder.

Continuing the arcade theme, **Thomas Wright** has come up with *PsiTris* (yet *another* Tetris clone), with specific versions for Siena (CD04 onwards, in `\library\siena`) and Series 3a/3c (CD01 onwards, in `\library\games`). Tetris fan though I am, I'm not sure the world can take any more versions without overdosing—authors please note!

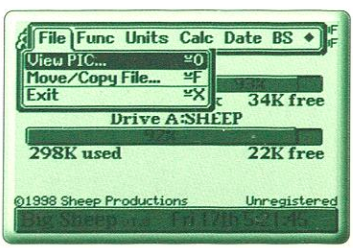
For the Series 3a/3c/Siena

Sheep everywhere

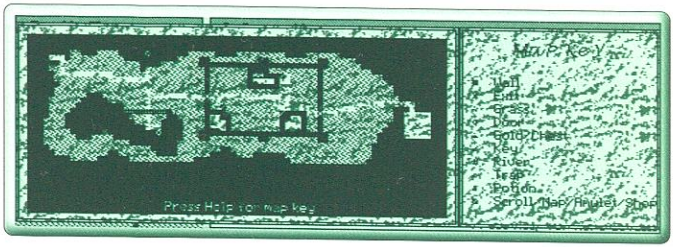
For some reason Siena authors have been very busy lately. One of the most prolific is **Graham Parks**, who styles all his programs round a bizarre (but endearing) 'sheep' theme! *SheepTetris* is a simple sideways-scrolling Tetris clone with surprisingly pleasing graphics. *Big Sheep* is a large collection of useful utilities, encompassing music, units, time and date calculations and finally a *PacMan* arcade game (called, inevitably, *Pac-Lamb*), in which you race your little player round a maze, eating power pills and trying to avoid the



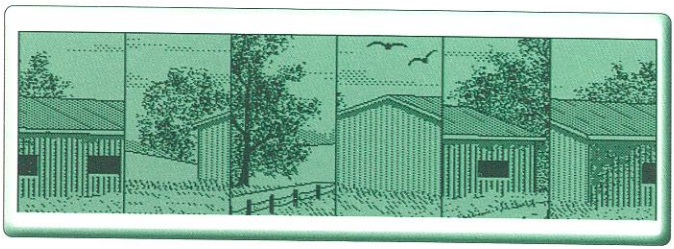
PacLamb. Another woolly one from Graham Parks



Big Sheep. Several Siena utilities under one roof...



Ye olde map: Castle 2



Spin the pieces with Mirror

The Series 3 adventure

Darren Prescott, the programmer who came up with the original freeware *Castle* adventure game, has been busy as well. *Castle 2*, the sequel is now available, with more graphical panache, more levels, more monsters—well, you get the idea. It's attractively presented and combines the best of the text adventure breed with elements from more sophisticated PC RPG games. Again, there are versions available for the Siena (CD04 onwards, in `\library\siena`) and the Series 3a/3c (CD04 onwards, in `\library\games`). On a more controversial point, Darren's also responsible for *GameInfo*, a set of databases for both 3a/3c and '5' which contain cheats, hints and level codes for dozens of Psion games. Don't seek these files out if you want to avoid being tempted to take the easy way out next time you're stumped in Bomz or Stigma!

Mirror, mirror on the wall

Paul Bowlay's *Mirror* (CD04 onwards, in `\library\games`) is a new puzzle for the 3a/3c, in which you have to put a broken picture back together by telling the program how many pieces to 'mirror' (i.e. reverse their order) from one end of the screen to the other. On the harder difficulty levels you're forced to mirror larger numbers of pieces at the same time and there's a 'Chaos' level in which pieces become randomly invisible. All very testing.

On a more serious note

Those of you with long memories will remember *Slide*, my old demo/tutorial utility in which pictures, text and sound were brought together using an editor and viewer. The new v3.0 (CD03 onwards, in `\library\graphics`) is now freeware and has been overhauled by several other authors to add greater font control and timing tools for use as a presentation speaker's aid.

What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts to meet specific (and sometimes unusual) needs, shareware is sometimes supplied for use on a thirty day trial basis. If you like the software you are then asked to send a payment to the author. Some programs are freeware and don't require any payment at all. Each program comes complete with information about how to install and use it, and how to pay for it.

Where can I find it?

One way to get any of these programs is from the Internet. If you've got access to the web there are several on-line indices which link directly to the relevant author download page concerned. Most mainstream programs (excluding games) appear in the comprehensive Palmtop Software Directory on our web site. This is principally an online listing of popular applications available for all Psion palmtops (a paper version is often included right here at the end of an issue). The version on our web site is the best place to start, as each entry has a hyperlink directly to the program author. If you're trying to track down a game (we don't list those in the Directory because there are so many out there) just note the author's name and use the list of links at 3lib.ukonline.co.uk/authors.htm . To help you, we've also included a paper version of the author list at the back of this issue.

Things are actually even easier if you haven't got Internet access. As long as the program concerned has been out for a month or so, you should find a copy on the latest edition of the Palmtop CD-ROM, indexed into the appropriate category. To help you track each item down, from now on we'll quote the folder (directory) name where it's located, as well as the earliest CD number to incorporate the program in question.

How do I use it?

Once you've found the file you want, there are three steps to take:

1. Decompress the files. If you're new to computers you may not be familiar with compression. Psion applications normally have more than one component (e.g. the program itself, help files and pictures). These are normally compressed into one file, which makes them easier to distribute. Shareware is most commonly compressed in 'Zip' format, and you can recognise these by the '.ZIP' at the end of the filename. Before you can install and run the program, you need to extract these files with an 'unzip' program, which is freely available from your shareware supplier. If you use DOS, look for PKZIP, Windows users can use Winzip, and Mac users should try ZipIt or the commercial Stuffit Deluxe. You can also unzip files on your Psion without using another computer, using either PsiZip (Series 3a/3c, Siena and Series 5) or S5Zip for the Series 5.

2. Copy the files. You'll probably now need to transfer the unzipped files onto your Psion. To do this you'll need some external hardware, such as the PsiWin link or a Cyclone drive. Normally, one of the unzipped software files is a text file (e.g. README.TXT), which can be read in any word processor. It explains how the program should be installed and where the files need to be copied to on your Psion.

   See 'The Installation Game' in issues 14 and 15 for a more comprehensive discussion of the above procedures.

3. Install the application. From your 3/3a/3c or Siena system screen, select [Psion]-[I]. If the program was copied correctly, the filename should appear in the list. Select it, press [Enter], and the icon should be installed and ready to run. Series 5 users don't need to do this, as the newly installed program will automatically appear on the Extras bar.

Readers' Letters

Contribute & WIN PRIZES!

The Prize Letter in each issue wins the author a FREE software package or other Psion goodies from our special collection. Prizes are valued at up to £70 each!

Prize Letter

Watch out Psion

I recently purchased a Hewlett-Packard HP620LX WinCE palmtop (in addition to my Series 5), to allow me to compare the Psion EPOC and the WinCE platforms directly. The HP is the first palmtop computer with a colour screen to be released in the UK.

Although it is often argued that poor battery life will deter potential buyers from investing in a palmtop with a colour screen, it is my firm belief that this factor, although significant, may be outweighed by the positive aspects of a machine with a colour screen: clarity, contrast and usability being primary concerns. I believe that designers (including those at Psion) are busy working on a colour screen that doesn't rapidly drain batteries. The HP620LX's colour screen is an absolute pleasure to use and may be pivoted on its hinges at various angles to suit the user.

After the screen, perhaps the single most important part of the handheld device is the keyboard. No keyboard has come close to the functionality of the Series 5 at the time of writing. It has a keyboard against which all others are judged. Although many of the other WinCE machines come with relatively poor calculator-style units, the HP620LX keyboard is very good—responsive with sufficiently spaced keys.

With regards to the operating system, EPOC appears superior to WinCE. It becomes painfully obvious when using the HP620LX that the 'Pocket' applications that come as standard with WinCE are very much cut-down versions of those within the Windows 95/98 environment. The 'print preview' option is absent in both Pocket Word and Pocket Excel, and both of these applications offer limited formatting capabilities. The lack of a 'word count' in Pocket Word is viewed as a major omission by many, as is the lack of style sheets and the inability to justify text.

Pocket Internet Explorer is a much stronger application. With the web browser comes the ability to view web sites with frames (something missing from the Psion Internet software). On the downside, the application lacks the ability to send and receive faxes, although the software necessary to do so is included on many of the new machines. Psion's Message Suite does however appear more 'user friendly' and future updates will hopefully allow users to view frames too.

It becomes apparent when scanning the computer press that the technology of the WinCE machines is progressing rapidly and they are being afforded better reviews in the computer press as each month passes. The HP660LX has now been released in the US and this comes with 32MB of RAM as standard. Neither the operating system, Microsoft, nor the third party vendors (such as Hewlett Packard, Casio, Sharp, etc.) should be underestimated. There is an urgent need for an EPOC-based machine with a colour screen to be made available to consumers. A colour screen, an internal soft-modem, at least 16 MB of RAM and a PC Card slot must be viewed as essential features for the machine of today. Psion must not rest on its laurels—they have a lot of work to do if they want to retain their share of the handheld computer market.

Andy Nott
Camborne, Cornwall

A case for Mulberry

I feel that I must complain about your review of the Mulberry case in issue 18.

I'll start by stating that I have no connection or affinity with Mulberry. My complaint stems from your subjective response to the price of a product manufactured by a company synonymous with lavish quality and expensive produce. Expense is not an issue for a person who wants to buy a Mulberry product. Such items are purchased to promote status value, and fulfil the need to own a quality product with a known, quality name stamped on it.

The fact that a 32MB CF storage disk or a ten year supply of AA batteries can be obtained for a similar price is not relevant. Mulberry cases are aimed at a very distinct sector of the market. That sector will welcome some luxury items with open arms.

Surely it is fantastic for Psion that companies such as Mulberry are making first class products to accompany their machines. I think you failed to recognise that there is a place in the market for such a product, and that it is wholly unfair to compare the cost of it with other Psion peripherals. A Mulberry product is about quality, brand and status. Not how many new gizmos you get for your dosh.

A small blip in an excellent magazine.

Grant Mearns
Acton, London

Thanks for your comments Grant. I agree that a product's value to certain prospective customers is not diminished by virtue of high cost, but I hope that this was reflected in both positive comments regarding the design and build level, and the fact that the case received a full five stars for quality.

It was important to note in the review that the £185 doesn't actually buy you a significantly better product than the excellent Covertec and Vega equivalents, and for 99% of *Palmtop* readers that is the overriding factor. The other 1% may see the Mulberry name, read our endorsement of the quality, and make the purchase-Ed.

Fix your quality problems!

In the last few issues of *Palmtop* the future of Psion has been discussed, and some readers have argued that Psion has to develop new features (such as a colour screen) and other models to fight back the threat from the CE world. This may all be very true, but I have

found a more simple problem that Psion needs to address just to keep the good name they have now. That problem is poor quality.

I have been the happy owner of Psion products for about four years now, and until recently I was very satisfied with the quality. I started out with a second-hand 3a which I bought from a friend. I grew very fond of it using it for almost everything. After a while the hinges broke and I had to send it away for repair. The same problem subsequently happened to my wife (who now owned the 3a).

With the 3a I more-or-less accepted it—it was second-hand and about four years old. With my '5' it is different. I have had it for seven months now and I've had paint peeling off the casing, small cracks in the base (bottom of the casing) and a broken hinge. This is not the quality one could expect of such a costly product. I am aware that Psion has addressed the paint problem, but still I have paid £650 (Danish prices) and MY paint still comes off...

I take reasonable care of my Psion. It's always kept in a holster or carrying case and I take care not to drop it, but the product is *designed* to be portable and should therefore be able to stand normal daily use (not *abuse*, of course). If Psion wants to know how it can be done they only have to look at Nokia, who has designed their 6110a mobile telephone that can be dropped off the top of Big Ben and still work!

Please, Psion—get your act together and produce the quality we should be entitled to expect from the high price you demand. Or produce a model in an aluminium case that can stand daily life.

Kristian Nielsen
Copenhagen, DENMARK

A complete solution?

I thought I'd send you a short note for the letters column regarding my own use of the Series 5, after having resisted buying one for too long. It's the sort of letter I would like to have read a long time ago.

After months of trying to convince myself to hold off buying a Series 5 to replace my 3a, I finally succumbed to temptation. One of my main reasons for not getting one straight away was that some of the add-on software so essential to my 3a wouldn't yet be available for the Series 5. I also read all the initial stories of omissions and bugs in the 5's built-in software.

After about seven months of using it I'm now totally convinced that I made the right decision to get a Series 5. The in-built software has all the functionality I had on the 3a, apart perhaps from a couple of points. The outlining feature in the Series 3a's WORD which was so useful for navigating around minutes of a meeting was certainly an omission, but the touch sensitive screen and scroll bars make navigation faster, reducing the inconvenience of being without it.

The lack of templates in WORD is a drawback, but I've now loaded the shareware *Stationary Pad*, which allows me to create new documents from templates—not just for WORD, but *any* document-based application. This, coupled with *Macro5*, leaves a new fax or letter just a hotkey and single screen tap away. My company fax template in Microsoft Word (complete with boxes, etc.) translated perfectly, and I can add a signature and fax the document without ever printing it!

In AGENDA the Series 5's ability to span midnight with events (flights) was a massive improvement over the Series 3, and the ability to bring up a year view and move to a

different date with a couple of pen taps is much slicker than the 3's navigation routes. Add the ability to write a SKETCH note quickly just by writing on the screen, and the Series 5's slightly more cumbersome method of repeating entries pales into insignificance for me. I've just registered the shareware *BusyView*, which gives both the 3c style 'busy' view and the month view calendar-style boxes. Once again pen navigation and screen size make this application very pleasing to use.

As for add-on software I don't think anything need be said regarding the improvements of the integrated Message Suite over PsiMail Internet and add-on faxing for the 3a.

The excellent shareware *S5Bank* has all the functionality of *S3aBank* and the touch screen navigation is used intelligently to improve access to regularly used functions.

S5Notes is a good replacement for JOTTER on the 3c, and for me has proved an adequate replacement for *Notepad Deluxe* as a place to keep miscellaneous information and notes.

Macro5 (formerly *Switchtask*) provides me with hotkeys and macros (including *Exab* for abbreviation expansion) as a replacement for *Macsys* on the 3a.

Mapper on the Series 5 is definitely 'The Next Generation', the *Timevoc* speaking clock is now available for the traveller, and your tired jet-lagged hand has only to find the screen now if the escape key's too small a target.

Should you get a Series 5 now and pass your 3a/3c on to an understanding partner? YES—the only regret you'll have is that you didn't do it sooner.

Steve Cooper
Cramlington, Northumberland

Hanging on the telephone

Reading my copy of *Palmtop* on the way to work today (and walking into two bushes at the same time), a few thoughts came to me that I wish to express to other readers.

First of all, I was wondering if I was the only one having to wait endlessly on the telephone whenever I call Psion Technical Support. Every time I have called them I have had to wait at least 10 minutes, if not more. If Psion want to stay in the market and not be beaten by Windows CE then their customer service should be improved. Someone at Psion pointed out that they were aware of the problem and were trying to improve the situation. One option suggested by them was to charge for the technical support line at a premium rate. What do others think of this?

The dispute that the original (1.00 to 1.01) ROM upgrade for the Series 5 brought about reminds me of a similar situation we are in now. All those PC users paying £70 to upgrade to Windows 98 are basically paying for a bug-fixed (or so Microsoft hope) version of Windows. We Psion users were lucky enough (admittedly after Psion changed their mind) to get our bug-fixed version of the ROM free. We should support Psion for this, and buy their new ROM 1.1 when it comes out. This will allow Psion to develop further in the rapidly expanding and competitive palmtop market.

Eytan Abrahams
Prestwich, Manchester

A Closer Look...

...at some of the newest and most interesting products available for your Series 3a/3c, or Series 5/Geofox One

P-Plus Bridge

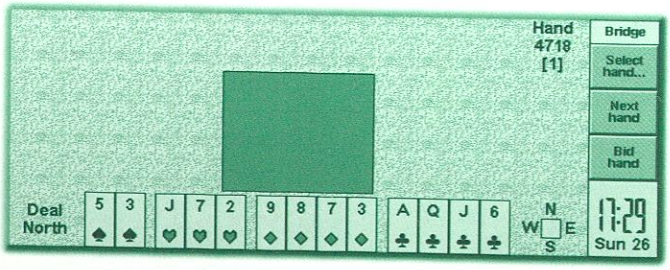
Series 5

Reading the promotional material on the nicely presented packaging for P-Plus Bridge brought a smile to my face. It claims to be "The World's first and best Bridge program for the Psion". Being the first, and currently the *only* S5 Bridge game, then it simply *must* be the best. However, that is not the actual intention behind the claim. Breva Software's P-Plus Bridge is based on the Q-Plus Bridge engine for the PC, which was ranked number one at bidding and came second at card play (to Bridge Barron) in the 1997 World Computer Bridge Championships.

Supplied on two floppy disks, P-Plus Bridge uses EPOC Install for simplicity. Disk one contains the install SIS file, plus utilities to install the Add/Remove option to the EPOC Control Panel or to EPOC Install, if needed. Disk two contains extensive additional documentation on bidding systems in Microsoft Word and Windows Write formats.

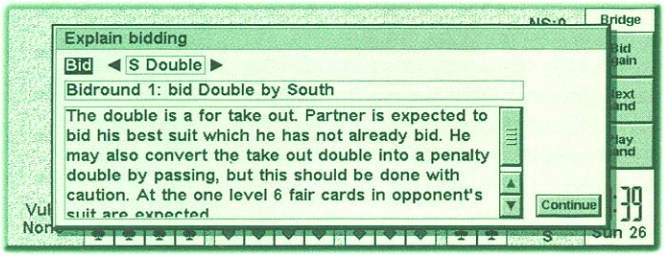
Once installed, you have thirty days in which to 'register' the game with Breva Software. Registration involves supplying Breva with an eight-digit code generated by the program and receiving an eight-digit 'unlocking code' in return, which when entered will prevent the program from reverting to a demonstration-only mode. However, registration after the expiry period will still 'unlock' it.

I wasn't impressed by the requirement to register P-Plus Bridge. Apart from being a nuisance, the method used seems to imply that registration is machine ID-specific. If so,



Bidding in P-Pus Bridge

The extensive online help system, showing an explanation of the bidding process


Explain bidding
Bid
S Double
Bidround 1: bid Double by South
The double is a for take out. Partner is expected to bid his best suit which he has not already bid. He may also convert the take out double into a penalty double by passing, but this should be done with caution. At the one level 6 fair cards in opponent's
Continue
Bridge
Sun 26

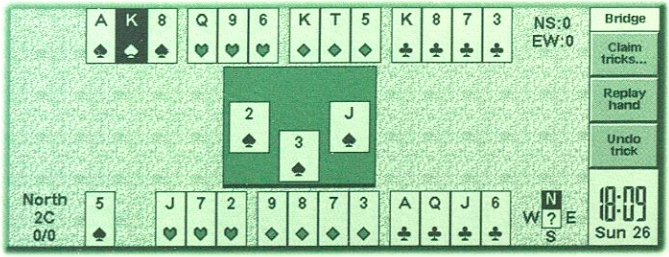
this may cause future problems for a user with a broken machine that has to be replaced.

P-Plus Bridge plays Contract Bridge, a game usually played by four people acting in pairs. There are two key aspects to the game: bidding to arrive at the contract that one pair will aim to meet, and card play where hands are played out to win as many tricks as possible. One pair will aim to win the contract and the other pair's aim is to stop them. So, there are two key abilities that P-Plus Bridge must have, i.e. the ability to bid well and to play the cards correctly to win as many tricks as possible. Card play is the most difficult area for computer bridge programs to do well and to challenge good human players. More on that later.

Bidding conventions used differ between countries, clubs and personal preferences. In the UK the Acol systems are used most often, in the US the American Standards systems are in widespread use. P-Plus Bridge has nine different bidding conventions, including the Acol and American Standard systems. The chosen conventions can be set for the East/West and North/South pairs. During the bidding process you can get hints on your next bid and explanations of the basis behind the bids that have already been made.

Designing a good Bridge program is more difficult than designing a good Chess program, because there is unknown information, i.e. the hands of the other players. Computers play Bridge by conducting detailed searches of the possible tricks to be played in any hand, and by looking ahead to the consequences for tricks in future hands. (See the *Tech-Topics* article on page 83- Ed.) for some idea of the size of this task. To make the card selection task possible within a reasonable time frame, limits are placed on the routines used.

P-Plus Bridge has five pre-set play levels, plus a custom option where two of the parameters affecting the depth of search and the



A game in progress...

time allowed for a move to be selected by the computer can be set by the user. The play level setting does not affect the bidding behaviour, just the time required to make the choice of card to play. Having said that, the program seems very quick to make its selections, even on level five.

To maximise the computer's strength of play there is a 'Cheat' option, where the computer is allowed to see all of the hands—thus removing the unknown information. Similarly, there is an option to allow the human player to see all the cards.

The 46-page manual supplied is clearly laid out and easy to understand. It takes the player through the various stages of a game (such as bidding and card play) in an uncomplicated manner. However, the instructions assume that the player already understands the fundamental purpose of bidding and how to play tricks. So purchasers of P-Plus Bridge wishing to try their hand at Bridge for the first time will need a book or a friend to explain the basics of the game. This is not altogether surprising, as the rules of Bridge are reasonably simple to acquire, but it's a complex and subtle game that needs a lot of experience to play well.

All of the menu and configuration options are explained clearly in the manual and good online help is available. Even though extensive information on the bidding conventions is given in the manual, a huge amount of additional detail is provided as document files on the second floppy disk.

So far as the strength of game play goes, the championship success outlined earlier is testimony to the competence of the Bridge 'engine' Breva have employed.

During bidding, playing and scoring the screen displays are well laid out and clearly presented. However during card play a 'compass' device is used to indicate who is to play and when the computer is 'thinking'. This often seemed to be out of step with reality, sometimes leading to confusion.

Very flexible configuration options are provided for controlling bidding and play, with plenty of opportunities to change your mind and reverse your bidding or play decisions. I found the explanations given for the bidding choices and hints to be very helpful.

Overall, version 1.1 is an impressive first release of P-Plus Bridge. However, version 1.2 with even more features, including still more flexibility in bidding and an updated manual, is due out around October this year. Breva Software is offering a free upgrade to the new version for existing users.

Leigh Edwards

P-Plus Bridge

From: Breva Software

Availability: now (English only)

Contact: 0161 764 6800

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: floppy disk

Price: £59.95 inc. VAT (plus postage)

Quality:

Value:

Office Log

Series 3a/3c/Series 5

Keeping track of phone calls, emails, faxes, letters and other correspondence can be a nightmare. Most of us don't have the need to log *every* such task we perform during the course of a busy day, but those dealing with especially large volumes (such as helpdesk operators, technical support staff and so on) may be obliged to do exactly that.

AGENDA is a poor choice for such 'event logging', as new entries are not accurately time stamped and so can't easily be categorised without manually typing in lengthy descriptions. There's also no simple way to sort and view the entries in isolation from all your other AGENDA information. DATA can be used at a push, with one entry per record, but again it's all a long-winded process, especially as a way to record simple events that have no specific details attached to them, other than the time of the event itself.

So, what's really needed is a dedicated program that allows super-quick entry of all the myriad forms of business communication, with an automatic date and time stamping function. Enter Estuary Technologies Ltd's *Office Log*.

Available in separate Series 3a/3c and Series 5 variants, the two versions differ only in the smallest cosmetic details. The Series 5 version has added pen input for item selection, scrolling and so forth, but as the entire ethos of the program revolves around the entry of events with only a couple of keypresses, the time taken to glance up and tap the pen on the screen will almost always slow down an otherwise slick and elegant process.

To enter an event, the pull-down menus are not used at all—that's an unnecessary step. The first stage is to define the action type: phone call, voicemail, letter, fax, email, conversation or 'other'. The selection is made by simply pressing the letter 'p' for phone call, 'f' for fax, and so on. The name of the action then appears in the bottom left corner of the screen as a reminder.

The next step is to define whether the event was 'to' you or 'from' you. If you wish to log a fax *from* John Williams, press 'f' for fax, then 'f' to indicate that it was *from* him (or 't' if it was *to* him). As soon as you designate the direction of the contact in this way, a dialog box will immediately spring up in which you enter the name of the person or organisation concerned. This is limited to 10 characters on both machine types, so 'John Williams' will need to be contracted to 'J Williams', 'John W' or similar.

The really good news is that if you wish to log no further details then a single press of the [Enter] key will complete the job. If you were

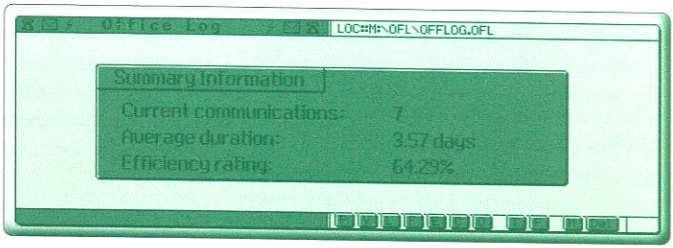
Office Log
LOC:M:\OFL\OFFLOG.OFL
to CC 13 Jul 14:00 finalise artwork
fr BA 19 Jul 17:32 Don't forget dinner on Thursday!
fr TSS 20 Jul 13:17 Confirmation of meeting next week
to Frankie 22 Jul 14:14 sort meeting minutes
fr JD 12 Jul 09:44
to SL 21 Jul 14:28 call back tomorrow
to Paul D 22 Jul 11:33 Check with bureau

Office Log on the Series 3a/3c. Note the crossed-through entries and aide memoires at bottom

Office Log
LOC:M:\OFL\OFFLOG.OFL
letter fr JD 12 Jul 09:44
fax to CC 13 Jul 14:00 finalise artwork
phone fr BA 19 Jul 17:32 Don't forget dinner on Thursday!
letter fr TSS eeting next week
phone to SL
phone to Paul D
phone to rrr
conv to Frankie 22 Jul 14:14 sort meeting minutes
Enter name
Name: Fred

Faxing to Fred. The text in bottom left confirms what has been entered

A quick press of the diamond key brings up a summary of your average response times



already in Office Log before starting that's a mere *two* keystrokes to define the event, plus however many you need to describe the party you were dealing with. If you have few enough contacts that you can define them all with a two or three character abbreviations then the whole thing will have taken no more than a second or two to perform.

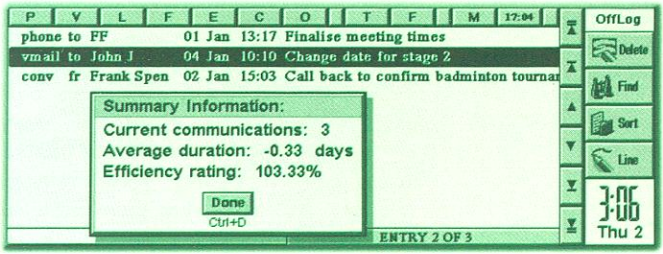
In reality, most events will need at least a brief note to remind you of any outstanding actions or critical data, so a quick tap of the 'm' key pops up another dialog box in which you can add up to 35 characters (quite ample, in my opinion) on a 3a/3c, or 210 on a Series 5. If you wish to change the timestamp at this point a (slightly unintuitive) press of the [Delete] key brings up another suitable dialog box.

Entries appear in a tabulated list that occupies almost the entire screen, and can be sorted in either ascending or descending chronological order. Completed entries can either be deleted or crossed through, just as with AGENDA. All entries beyond a user-defined age can be purged at any time, and alarms can be assigned to entries as needed, with a small indicator appearing next to each one.

A neat summary function shows the current number of communications in the log, the average time taken to complete actions, and a percentage 'efficiency rating' that can be used to give some gauge of whether your communication response times are actually improving as a result of using Office Log.

A lot of thought has obviously gone into keeping the number of required keystrokes to a bare minimum, and this is what makes Office Log so eminently usable. In most respects this spartan interface is to be applauded, but there are also a few areas where a little extra functionality would be welcome.

The first limitation is that although it's possible to search for any text string within both the names and notes, there's no facility to filter entries by any category, so you can't quickly bring up a list of all the letters to Fred, or all the incoming faxes for the month of


P V L F E C O T F M 17:04
phone to FF 01 Jan 13:17 Finalise meeting times
vmail to John J 04 Jan 10:10 Change date for stage 2
conv fr Frank Spen 02 Jan 15:03 Call back to confirm badminton tournar
Summary Information:
Current communications: 3
Average duration: -0.33 days
Efficiency rating: 103.33%
Done
Ctrl+D
ENTRY 2 OF 3
OffLog
Delete
Find
Sort
Line
Thu 2

...and running on the Series 5. Cosmetically different, but functionally equivalent

May. As some recompense you can export Office Log files as comma-delimited text for manipulation in another package, but there's no reason why this should be necessary.

The second feature on my wish-list is the ability to pre-enter a pick-list of names, or even to link directly to a separate address list. In this way it would be easier to consistently enter details in the same way, rather than risking the confusion of entering 'J Smith" on one occasion and 'John S' on another. In fairness this adds the risk of slowing the entry process and thus compromising the program's efficiency, but it would be nice to have the option.

Overall, Office Log is a model of good design, with the emphasis firmly on input efficiency. If you find it too tedious to keep your communication log up-to-date even with *this* software then there's truly no other program to consider. It would be virtually impossible to get the job done in any more rapid manner. It's easy to install, takes five minutes to learn, and represents good value for money.

Steve Clack

Office Log

From: Estuary Technologies Ltd

Availability: now (English only)

Contact: +353 87 2341693 (Ireland)
ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/estuary

Runs on: Series 3a/3c/5/Geofox One

Supplied on: floppy disk

Price: 22.50 Irish pounds (around £21)

Quality:

Value:

Logit

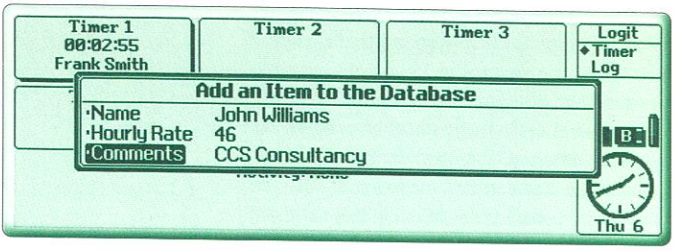
Series 3a/3c/Series 5

Like so many data-logging tasks, keeping track of anything time-related is a job that palmtop computers were born to. The presence of a real-time clock means that any entry, keypress or other action can be automatically time and date stamped. The calculation functions of the computer can add or subtract times from each other to show the exact period elapsed between events.

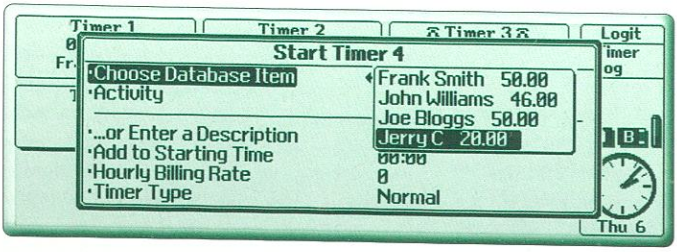
In its simplest form this capability makes your Psion palmtop a potentially decent sports lap timer, but by taking the multi-tasking nature of all Psion computers into account, several timing events can be left running in the background—creating an immensely powerful multi-event timer. Many timed events can be in progress simultaneously, regardless of what other applications are running.

Pelican Software's shareware *Logit* for the Series 3a/3c (also known as 'LOG-IT!') has been available for some time now, with a Series 5 version just recently announced. Both products work on the premise of allowing up to six simultaneous timers to be used to record any events you might envisage. Although the timers can be used for monitoring something as simple as the length of a telephone call or time spent online via your Internet connection (always a frightening revelation), Logit is primarily designed for people who need to charge their time by the hour (or even the minute). Consultants, lawyers, solicitors, programmers and anyone who has to invoice clients for time spent on a particular project will all find great use for Logit.

Both versions of the software operate from two principal screens: the 'Timer' view and the 'Log' view. Timer view on both machines displays an array of six boxes, each showing the elapsed time and identifying name of that particular client or event. Logit keeps track of clients by keeping their details in its own database. These details include a default billing rate and comments, in the case of the



Adding client details on the 3a/3c. Note the timer windows in the background



Starting a timer, selecting appropriate client details from the main database

Logit's timer log on the 3a/3c, showing all current details in list form

Timer Log

Date	Time	Description	Logged	Rate	Charge
08/09/95	11:57am	Calling Canada	2.3 h	35.00	80.50
08/09/95	11:58am	New Jersey - A...	0.6 h	1.35	0.81
08/09/95	11:58am	New Jersey - A...	0.6 h	1.35	0.81
08/09/95	11:58am	Cis download	2.6 h	0.00	0.00
08/09/95	11:58am	San Antonio CSI	12.2 h	25.00	305.00
08/09/95	11:58am	Cis download	2.6 h	0.00	0.00
08/09/95	11:58am	San Antonio CSI	12.4 h	25.00	310.00
09/11/95	05:13pm	test	0.0 h	0.00	0.00

Time: 141.4 hrs Selected: All 37807.62

Series 3a/3c version, plus many extended billing options on the Series 5.

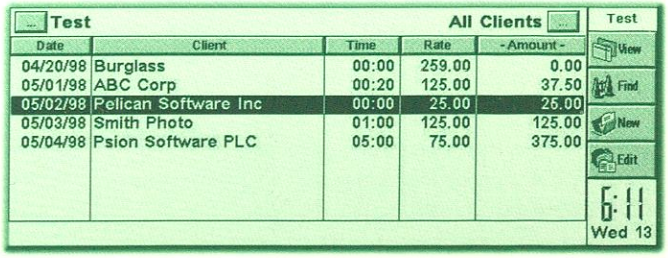
All timers can be started, stopped or paused with a single keypress (or pen tap), and timers can easily be adjusted manually to account for delayed input of entries and other anomalies. The maximum of six timers may be a limiting factor for the heaviest of users, but for the majority of us it's more than ample. Timers can be individually set to 'countdown' rather than record elapsed time, sounding an alarm after a pre-determined period.

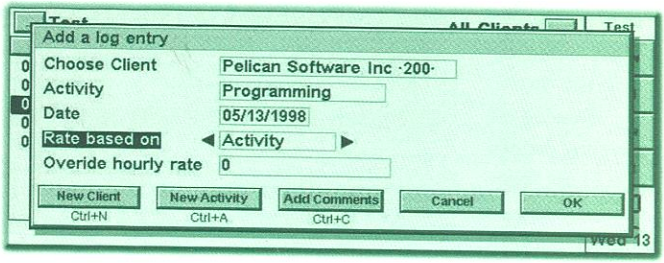
Current timer information can be displayed at any point, so if a client calls to ask how much is outstanding on their account you can access a summary window with a single keypress.

Logit on the Series 5 makes good use of the extra facilities in the newer machine, with toolbar selection of the most commonly used functions, pause/resume of timers with a tap on the relevant box, and sorting of items in the Log view by tapping on the relevant category headings. The Series 5 version also has more comprehensive reporting functions,

Logit on the Series 5, showing a more graphical Timer view

Sort your columns by tapping on the relevant heading...





Adding a log entry on the Series 5—more options than you can shake a stick at...

outputting summary data either on screen or to a printer. The new version adds other features too, including the ability to add client addresses and up to six billing rates per client. Unless you really need the flexibility, the myriad options in this version of the program can be somewhat daunting to the beginner, and the Series 3a/3c version is easier to get to grips with.

Logit is an impressively capable application on both Psion platforms, and the seemingly endless configurability of client billing details, sorting and filtering of entries on the Series 5 version shows great attention to detail. Much of the extra flexibility of the Series 5 version can simply be ignored if not needed, but the product still takes a little while to learn.

The 3a/3c version has fewer setup options, but includes a small calculator window inside Logit itself, so the user can perform the odd calculation without tasking out to CALC.

The Series 5 version is compatible with *Timeslips*, a popular PC-based time billing application, but for most users the Psion package by itself has all the functionality that's needed for accurate time management.

If you need to monitor time in any serious fashion then Logit is a heavy-duty solution. The 3a/3c incarnation has fewer high-end features than the S5 version, but this is in many ways balanced by its shallower learning curve.

Modestly priced at US$25 for the shareware Series 3a/3c version (pricing for the commercial Series 5 version has yet to be announced), it's a powerful application for today's busy professional.

Paul Nelson

Logit

From: Pelican Software

Availability: 3a/3c now, S5 August 1998

Contact: +1 713 242 8928 (USA)
www.pelicansoft.com

Runs on: 3a/3c or Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: S5 version on floppy disk

Price: US$25 (S5 version TBA)

Quality:

Value:

Contact!

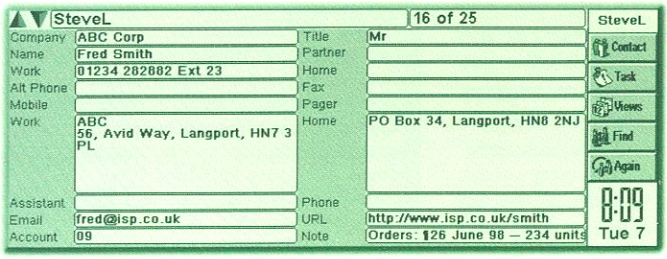
Series 5

RMR Software have a very long pedigree in the world of Psion software and their decision to take Tim Richardson's *Contact!* onboard as part of their portfolio was doubtless not taken lightly.

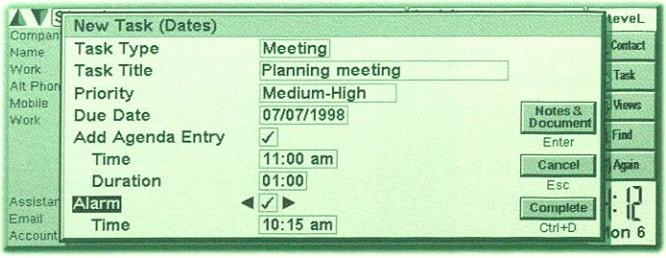
Contact! is still (at the time of writing) the only true contact management application for the Series 5 and I've been trying out version 1.1fl—actually a much more mature version than you'd guess from the number. The program has already been through several revisions and numerous beta phases, and this iterative process has resulted in a very polished product.

Despite the power of EPOC's built-in AGENDA and DATA programs (see 'The Swiss-army contact manager' article in issue 14), a true contact manager is a real necessity for many a Psion user. The ability to link actions, dates and notes to individual contacts makes a businessperson's job so much easier. Although Contact! doesn't go as far as being fully relational (you can't have separate 'people' and 'company' databases, for instance), it still allows the attachment of notes, tasks and actions to different contacts, and cleverly inserts entries (and alarms) in your main AGENDA if required.

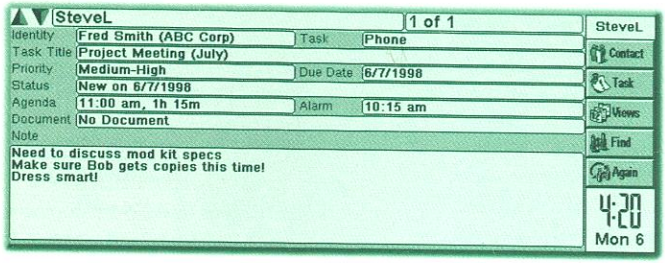
Contact! is very task-focussed, and most of its core functions revolve around the definition of specific tasks applied to specific people (e.g. 'meet with Fred Smith', 'email Sue Brown', etc). Each task can have up to nine different priorities (possibly too many) plus due date, notes and an attached file. The latter can be either a WORD, SHEET, DATA or SKETCH file and (importantly) doesn't have to be created from scratch, so you can link to existing documents and save much cutting and pasting.



The main contact screen



Creating a new task



The standard task view

Although you can't attach general notes to a contact directly, a workaround would be to add a new task of type 'Note' and with the status 'Complete'. You can also get round the built-in limit of one file attachment per task by using EPOC's *objects* to embed other document types within a WORD or DATA attachment.

Four main views form the core of the program's user interface: contact, contact list, task and task list, although the font sizes used throughout are fixed and there's disappointingly no zoom facility for tired eyes.

Keystrokes throughout were well thought out—I especially liked the way that each screen in the definition of a contact or task had [Enter] set up to automatically move onto the next section. Contact! also brings up the 'Task status' dialog after each change to encourage you to keep each one up to date.

Contact!'s refinement process is not yet complete though, and some dialogs were missing an 'OK' (or similar) button, particularly in the rather fiddly 'Import' section. Although I managed to get my existing database imported successfully into Contact!, I was glad that the process was a one-off. To be fair to the program, most difficulties in importing information from a different system usually boil down to badly structured data in the first place.

Final impressions were very good, though. There are excellent search and filtering systems, giving you dozens of different ways of sorting and selecting your contacts and tasks, and a clear and concise set of help screens.

With all this functionality and considering that the author is offering free upgrades to all future versions, Contact! is well worth its £20 asking price.

Steve Litchfield

Contact!

From: RMR Software, and usual shareware sources

Availability: now (English only)

Contact: www.rmrsoft.com

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: n/a

Price: £20

Quality:

Value:

NStore

Series 3a/3c/Series 5

As any teacher will tell you, keeping track of students as they work their way through the National Curriculum can be a time consuming affair. It's actually quite tricky if you teach a *standard* curriculum subject, but if like me you're an IT specialist and IT is delivered *across* the curriculum, then keeping tabs on it all is a very onerous and time-consuming task indeed. Over the years I've tried numerous ways of logging progress, including several computer applications. They all suffer from being tied to a desktop computer that isn't necessarily located where the class is taught.

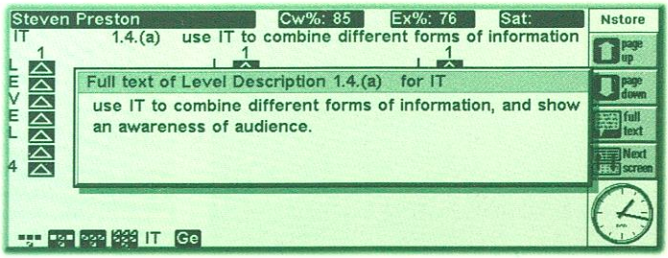
HS Software, who produce one of the best selling National Curriculum attainment recording programs, have now ported it onto the Series 3a/3c and Series 5.

NStore is supplied on SSD for the 3a/3c or floppy disc for the Series 5. Once installed the programs are more or less identical between platforms, with the only difference being the features inherent in each computer.

When run for the first time, you must decide exactly what information you wish to display. The worrying part here is that you have to make a decision which is effectively irreversible. Once you have decided which subjects you wish to store, that's it. The manual suggests that if you're not sure about a particular subject then *do* choose it, because if you say 'no' now you'll have to start again if you change your mind later. The manual could be more helpful at this stage; all it tells you is that secondary teachers would probably choose their own subject, while primary school teachers would probably choose all subjects.

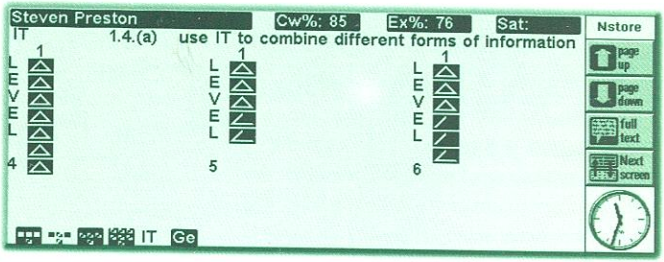
Once the subjects have been chosen, a window will pop up asking for the number of classes and the number of topics required. After entering this information the program works out exactly how much space you'll need. The software then creates a single file, which will overwrite any other file generated by NStore. Here too I felt there was room for some improvement. Governed to some extent by the limitations of memory, the software allows a maximum of 36 classes and 36 topics. Had NStore been able to cope with more than one file, this need not be an issue.

Once the overall parameters have been established, the pupil information is entered. Keyboard entry is straightforward, but most people will choose not to type in every name, rather to import a CSV file of names that can be taken from the school's administration software (such as *SIMS* or *Key Solutions*). NStore offers full editing for names, including moving a child from one class to another.



The National Curriculum levels can be displayed

Touching the boxes with the Series 5's pen will give a value of either 0, 1 ,2 or 3 to each attainment target



Once each pupil has been entered it is possible to call up each of the National Curriculum attainment target statements for each chosen subject. A statement for every NC subject is now in your computer. Statements for each child can be marked as 0, 1, 2 or 3. These marks translate to "*...has not addressed {target}*", "*...has been introduced to {target}*", "*...has performed {target} with help*" and "*...has performed {target} unaided*".

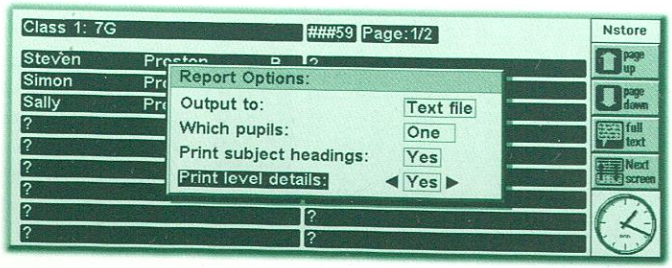
Using NStore on a portable computer means that the teacher can carry it around the classroom and quickly record individual students' progress with just a couple of keypresses.

As soon as all the information has been entered, the reports can be produced. Reports are not printed directly from NStore, but the data is moved into a word processor or desktop publishing program either on a desktop PC or in the Psion itself. If you've got a printer connected to your Psion the simplest way is to move the text from NStore into WORD and print from there. The advantage of this method is that once the data is in a word processor it can be easily be altered if required.

One of the main criticisms levelled against programs like NStore is that they rely heavily on banks of bland comments, which make the reports much less personal. Frankly I don't go along with this line. We all use comment banks: the difference is that the comment bank we are used to using is held in our head, not on a computer. If the comments held in NStore are deemed unsuitable they can easily be altered or added to, as can the National Curriculum attainment targets, should they ever be changed.

This is a complicated program, not helped by the manual—which I felt was too brief in parts. Also, the lack of an index means that finding the precise information you want is not always easy.

Apart from the manual, I'm really not happy with the fact that initial decisions are irre-



Once the date has been entered, a text report can be output to a word processor for editing and/or printing

versible. I can't envisage a situation where you might want to change your mind, but we've all heard of Sod's Law.

I've seen several programs of this type for a variety of platforms, but they generally suffer from the same problem: you have to inject a great deal of time and effort before you can even begin to reap any rewards. The first time NStore is used there will inevitably be some setting up to do: pupils' names and tutor groups will need to be entered at the very least. But once done, there seems to be little else to do other than simply using the program.

Every year, students' tutor group names change (7A becomes 8A), and there may be individual movement between classes. Both of these eventualities are catered for in NStore.

Of all the versions of NStore, the Series 5 is undoubtedly the best, for two reasons. Firstly, the fact that, like the Series 3a/3c version, it is portable, which enables the teacher to use NStore much more freely than if tied down to a desktop PC. Secondly, the features of the Series 5 lend itself very well to this program—the touch screen makes data entry so much easier. But I do feel that NStore could be further developed to take advantage of other advanced features of the Series 5.

NStore was originally written for the Acorn Archimedes computer but is now also available for PCs, as well as the two Psion versions. All versions have much the same features—the only differences being related to the amount of memory available on the various platforms.

Geoff Preston

NStore

From: H.S. Software

Availability: now (English only)

Contact: 01792 204519
www.argonet.co.uk/h.s.soft

Runs on: Series 3a/3c/5

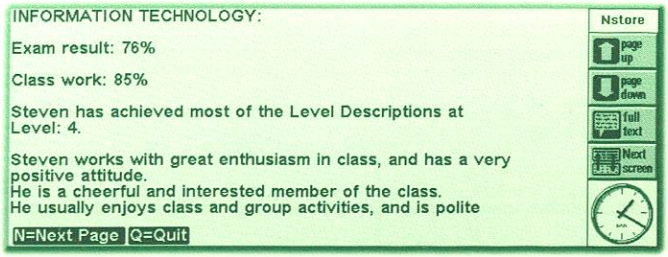
Supplied on: SSD/floppy disk

Price: £49.95 inc. VAT

Quality:

Value:

The output report is clear and concise, with references to work covered


INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:
Exam result: 76%
Class work: 85%
Steven has achieved most of the Level Descriptions at Level: 4.
Steven works with great enthusiasm in class, and has a very positive attitude.
He is a cheerful and interested member of the class.
He usually enjoys class and group activities, and is polite
N=Next Page
Q=Quit
Nstore
page up
page down
full text
Next screen

TVSched

Series 3a/3c

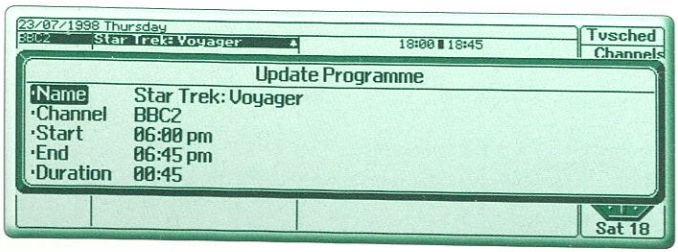
The Series 3a/3c AGENDA may be the best thing since sliced bread for organising much of our lives—it's certainly a very good jack-of-all-trades. This is why I approached David P Gymer's freeware utility *TVSched* with some suspicion. Surely (I thought) AGENDA is up to the task of planning a TV viewing schedule and warning of programs in advance? And if that's the case, what's the point of a dedicated third-party utility to do the same job?

Even if you're only a couch potato at Christmas and bank holidays, you may still have to face squabbles over family viewing and the frustration of missed gems. What's needed is a way of spotting conflicting shows (and thereby pre-empting any tantrums), and of being automatically reminded just before important programmes. Now AGENDA is very good at storing timed events, but lousy at showing overlapping entries, and positively brain-dead when it comes to handling those that span midnight (which of course is when *all* the best films are on).

There's also the fact that many Psion users (contrary to popular opinion) have a life and don't necessarily like to clutter their main AGENDA with such trivial entries as TV programs. One solution would be to have a separate AGENDA file, but a better one would be to use a dedicated third party application instead.

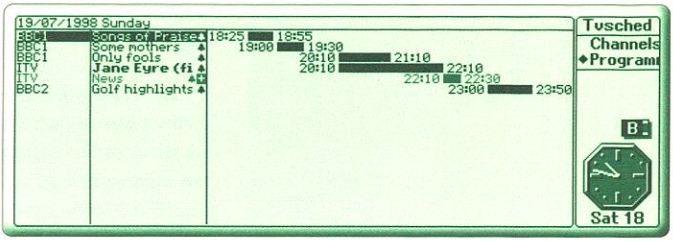
In the TVSched world, days begin (by default) at the same 6am start as in the (UK) daily TV listings, making the setting up of programmes less susceptible to accidents. Thus a 1:00am entry under 'Thursday' in the listings would be entered as such in TVSched, whereas AGENDA would force you to input the entry under Friday. The old AGENDA bugbear of not being able to handle entries that span midnight is also removed by TVSched in the same fell swoop. And it even appears that the latter can handle programmes spanning the new 6am boundary as well, which is good news if you're an early bird.

Although people like myself with only terrestrial television can get some benefit from TVSched, the application really comes into its own for those with cable or satellite access as well. It can handle the definition of as many channels as you need, grouped by category if need be. The more channels, of course, the greater the need to be well organised if you want to be sure of not missing anything. TVSched's main programme screen auto-scales cleverly to show at a glance the current day's schedule, with overlaps clearly shown on a bar graph. Each entry can have grey or bold attributes (should you wish to make it stand out for any reason) and can have a short memo attached, though I can't think why you'd need one.



Defining a TV program. The next step would be to set it to auto-repeat for the duration of the series...

A busy evening's viewing, now firmly under control



TVSched's also blindingly fast, partly due to its highly specific nature (it doesn't have to scan an entire personal AGENDA as well) and partly because it's been well-written in C. All the dialogs in the program are dynamic, in that they update themselves as needed even while you're moving up and down their lines, in exactly the same manner as within AGENDA itself.

When used in real-life, TVSched's tiny display font is sometimes a problem, especially in a dimly-lit living room, and the ability to zoom the text would have been welcome. The other annoyance (for me) is that every entry in the program is set up with an alarm by default and has to be manually altered (a minimum of 6 keystrokes) if you don't want the alarm sounded. I would have much preferred a way of prioritising TV programmes into 'missable' (non-alarmed) or 'unmissable' (alarmed).

These are minor points though, as TVSched is a big improvement over AGENDA for serious TV watchers. And as it's free, you'll save enough money to buy popcorn for a month.

TVSched is available from the usual share-ware sources and on *Palmtop CD04*.

Steve Litchfield

TVSched

From: usual shareware sources

Availability: now (English only)

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Series 3a/3c

Supplied on: n/a

Price: FREE

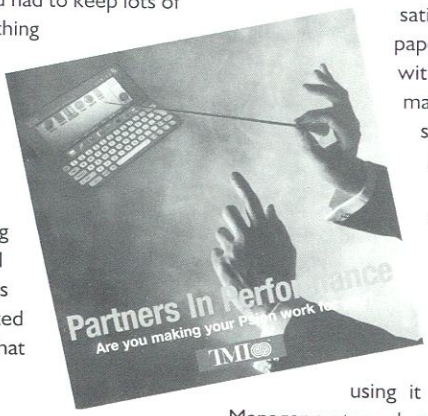
Quality:

Value:

TMI Time Manager training course

Series 3a/3c/Siena/Series 5

I recently persuaded the company I work for to send me on a time management course. This was not just the old fashioned course with an overgrown filofax and lots of paper, but one based on the Time Manager philosophy invented by the Danish company TMI, using the Psion3a/3c/Siena in place of the paper system. I confess that I always used to flee from any paper-based method. They invariably meant that you had to keep lots of lists, and plan everything carefully and completely—quite against *my* way of doing things. However, since my job was becoming ever more complex and needing greater skills to juggle all those tasks and projects (and since I am a dedicated Psion user), I decided that it might be worth a try.



The course spanned two days at TMI's offices in Henley-in-Arden (they also do the same course in London) and had twelve of us present, ranging from expert Psion users (I include myself) to novices, those already using the paper-based Time Manager, plus those who had never tried a paper time management system (myself again). The course lecturer Steve Betts was a great Psion enthusiast and provided a very good measure of support for the range of skills of the attendees. The Psion experts helped the novices (one a user of less than 24 hours) and we all learnt the Time Manager way of organising our work and lives together.

Using TMI Time Manager is almost a religion to the serious users, but the instructor with great sense of humour helped to show why the ideas are a good working basis for life. The Psion computers cannot quite emulate the paper system in every way, but the main methods of use are all there. In fact anyone could set it up for themselves, but that is not the only thing you get from the course.

The materials provided were a couple of interesting books: 'My Life Tree' by Claus Møller and 'Personal Organisation' by TMI, a small paper-based Time Manager with a 128K SSD with master copies of all the suggested settings for AGENDA, SHEET, DATA and WORD applications. There were also comprehensive paper notes on all the settings and ways of running the Psion, and on using it to maintain the Time Manager system electronically.

All the Psion demonstrations were given using the 3a Emulator on a PC, and the course attendees worked in pairs or groups of four on each task. The use of the [MENU] key was strongly discouraged, and after a short time we all were rapidly moving round AGENDA from view to view, and managing our To-Do lists with consummate ease. Using the direct keystrokes to get from one item/view to the next makes it so much faster and easier than working via the menus, and for me the emphasis on this optimised way of

working made the course worthwhile for that skill alone.

Although the course concentrates on the Time Manager methods of daily, weekly, monthly and yearly planning and key tasks (all of which the AGENDA handles well), the Psion's built-in spreadsheet and database applications are also used. TMI have a major commitment to using the Psion, and during the course a Psion representative was there to discuss how the Series 5 can be used in the same way.

Since I attended the course, TMI have developed a variant for Psion 5 users. The SSD and Time Manager pages for the 3a/3c/Siena or the CF disk and Time Manager pages for the Series 5 can be bought direct if you already use a paper-based Time Manager.

TMI also run a one-day course on Psion implementation for existing TMI users, priced at £250 plus VAT.

Lord John Wodehouse

TMI Time Manager course

From: TMI

Contact: 01564 794100
www.tmi.co.uk

Price: £625 plus VAT

Quality:

Value:

From TMI's course literature:

Course programme

- Individual objective setting.
- Overview of your goals and plans to achieve them.
- Most of the major functions of Psion AGENDA, along with some links to other Psion applications.
- Effective diary planning.
- Good habits for meetings.
- Identifying and handling 'Timestealers'.
- Personal action plans.
- Individual practice and group workshops.

Course goals

As a result of the programme individuals will be able to:

- Determine individual goals and establish priorities.
- Integrate long-term objectives with short-term demands.
- Customise the Psion for increased personal efficiency.
- Gain overview, structure and control of goals and associated tasks.
- Access important details faster.
- Reschedule and balance workload on screen.
- Manage paper and electronic information more effectively.

ConvertPro

Series 5

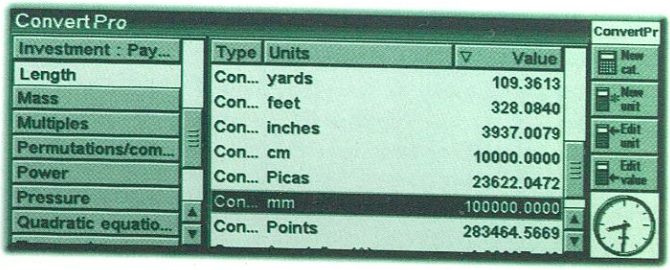
ConvertPro is Purple Software's first foray into freeware, and is available (only) from their web site. The software bears no resemblance to their much earlier 'Convert' program for the Series 3, and boasts a much more slick and efficient appearance. Beyond simple appearances, ConvertPro is nothing short of a completely customisable equation solving toolkit.

The left side of the screen contains a scrollable column of wide buttons, each describing a particular form of unit conversion: currency, density, temperature, volume, VAT calculations—19 general purpose categories in all. Additional plug-ins are also freely available for mathematical conversions (rectangular-polar coordinates, quadratics and so on) and financial calculations (primarily investment analyses).

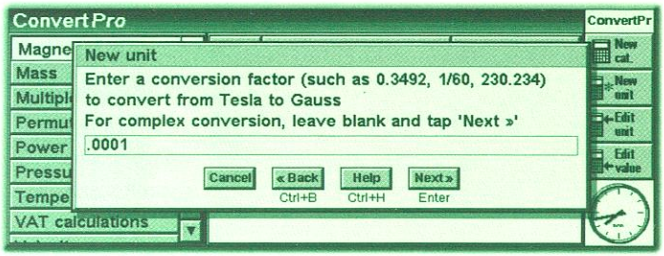
Simple unit conversions are evaluated by entering the value of the unit you wish to convert *from* by selecting it from the list down the right side of the screen. The equivalent in *all* other units is then displayed on the right side too. As an example, the 'length' conversion includes everything from ångströms through to inches, millimetres, furlongs and parsecs. Moving to the 'millimetres' line, pressing [Enter] to select, then entering '12' into the resulting dialog box and pressing [Enter] again will reveal solutions for *every* unit. You can thus scroll through the list to find the fact that 12mm is in fact 3.8889×10^{-19} Parsecs, 0.4724 inches, etc.

Of course, quadratic equations and investment calculations aren't really conversions at all, but formulae with several variables which must be entered in order to calculate the one or more unknowns. ConvertPro handles these complex situations by presenting a list of all the elements of each calculation in a tabular fashion. The arrow keys are then used to select the variables or constants one at a time, and a press of the [Enter] key brings up a dialog box enabling that particular value to be defined. The other values will dynamically change as different variables are entered, which also makes light work of 'what-if' calculations where you can experiment with, say, varying interest rates in a mortgage calculation and quickly view the results.

Most conversion programs suffer from one major limitation: if one of the particular conversions you need isn't already programmed into the software then you're stuck—you'll have to resort to using a regular calculator, or even pencil and paper. ConvertPro completely removes this frustrating scenario by allowing the user to add both new categories of conversions (and, of

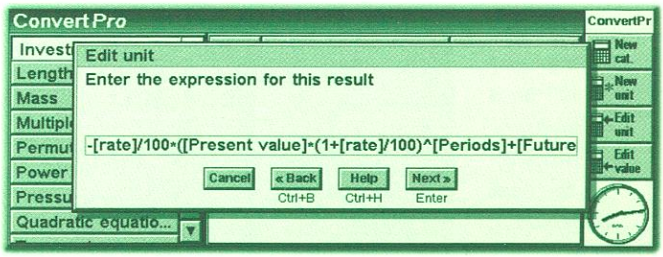


The 'length' conversion section, showing values in every possible unit of measurement



Going through the steps of a 'Wizard' to add a new unit of measurement

Building a complete new expression, showing all unknown values in square brackets



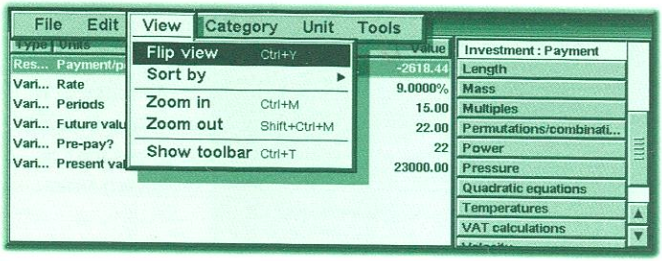
course, other equations), and to add new unit types to existing categories.

Inputting new calculation types is made easy by a PC-like 'Wizard' that guides you through each step of the process. You are first invited to select a category for the new unit, then a name, whether the new unit is a conversion, a constant, a variable or a result, a unit name to appear either before or after the number and the number of decimal places you wish to use when displaying the number. For constants, variables or results you are also asked to enter an equation or expression, simply including references to all other variables or constants within square brackets. The whole process is very easy and intuitive, and for simple unit conversions is the work of but a few seconds. Of course, once any new calculation type has been entered it appears in the listing along with all the others, and from that point on the calculation or conversion process becomes fully automatic.

To simplify calculations with many variables the list down the right side can even be sorted in an number of ways, and to give maximum flexibility Purple have also made the whole display zoomable to three different levels, and provided the ability to transpose the left and right display panels.

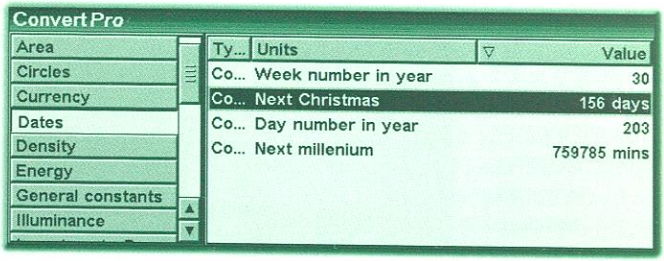
Apart from great flexibility, the real elegance of ConvertPro comes from the ability to select precisely the conversion types you require. Not only can any number of extra calculation/conversion types be added, but you can also delete all those you don't want—even down to the built-in defaults. Setting up the package in this way avoids endless scrolling past all the calculation types you *don't* use, while in search of those you *do*.

There's little to criticise about ConvertPro, partly because the very nature of the program allows it to be almost all things to all people. It can hardly be accused of 'missing' anything, because if a conversion or equation type isn't present then you just add it as



Complete flexibility—zoomed down, display flipped and toolbar off

It'll even tell you the number of days left until Christmas, or minutes until the next millenium...



required. You can even export the categories you create, perhaps to pass around to colleagues in the same profession. This neat feature should see lots of conversion add-ons appearing on the Internet as enthusiastic users build their own sets of conversion tools and feel compelled to share them with others. Who knows, perhaps it could even become a craze?

ConvertPro is the last word in conversion tools, and deserves a place on almost every Series 5 or Geofox. Purple Software do require you to fill out a brief online questionnaire before downloading it, but considering the value of the product this is entirely reasonable.

The only question remains "Why is this superb software free?" It's an eminently saleable product that's as polished as anything else in their portfolio—so go and download it *now*, before they change their minds!

Steve Clack

ConvertPro

From: Purple Software

Availability: now (English only)

Contact: www.purplesoft.com

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: n/a

Price: FREE

Quality:

Value:

FrotzS5

Series 5

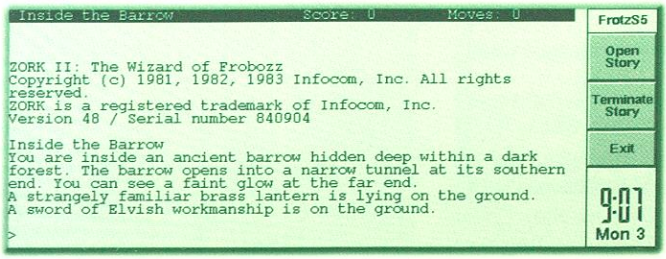
Regular *Palmtop* readers will have come across the idea of text adventure games several times in the last three years. Most recently in issue 16, in which Steve Clack selected the commercial Interdata collection of 'official' Infocom adventures as one of his three favourite games for the 3a/3c.

Briefly, each adventure is a text-only epic in which commands are typed in (GET LAMP, NORTH, LOOK, etc.) and location descriptions printed back to you on-screen. If this sounds boring then think again as the lack of graphics force you to use your imagination, which can often be far more colourful than the Psion's screen could possibly be! Most importantly, however, the depth of play and intelligence of the puzzles in each game is often far ahead of flashier graphical alternatives. This depth is what has inspired fanatical enthusiasm for the genre on the Internet, with many authors writing their own games in the old 'Infocom' format. You can download the results of their labours at *ftp://ftp.gmd.de/int-fiction/games/infocom/*

The Frotz project was started by such enthusiasts as a way of playing the adventures on every computer platform under the sun, with Frédéric Bouvry helping out here with the port onto the Series 5. Although *FrotzS5* will work with the commercial Infocom packs, it's also very happy with all the freeware and home-grown adventures. The combination of a free game-interface and dozens of free plug-in games, each of which offers up to a hundred hours of gameplay is an unbeatable recipe.

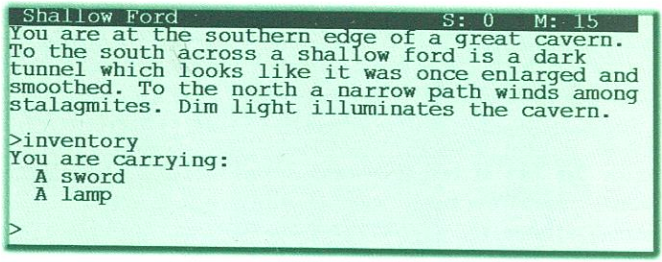
Four different zoom levels, each available with normal or bold text, assure that the game can be played in all lighting conditions. The only catch is that the zoom selection has to be done before a game is started. This is a little inconvenient as it means any display change is a three-step process of saving the game, zooming in or out and then restoring the game state. Getting familiar with the 'Save' command is in fact highly recommended due to the tricky nature of many of the puzzles and the fact that some of them can prove fatal to your character.

Once into a game (I tried out the free Zork II) you're largely on your own, and a lot of brain power is required to solve the various puzzles. Typing chores are kept to a minimum, despite the interface, by a clever key system in which you can scroll through, edit and reuse previously entered commands. Experienced text gamers will leap in eagerly and as for the rest of us—welcome to the learning curve!


Inside the Barrow
Score: 0
Moves: 0
ZORK II: The Wizard of Frobozz
Copyright (c) 1981, 1982, 1983 Infocom, Inc. All rights reserved.
ZORK is a registered trademark of Infocom, Inc.
Version 48 / Serial number 840904
Inside the Barrow
You are inside an ancient barrow hidden deep within a dark forest. The barrow opens into a narrow tunnel at its southern end. You can see a faint glow at the far end.
A strangely familiar brass lantern is lying on the ground.
A sword of Elvish workmanship is on the ground.
>
FrotzS5
Open Story
Terminate Story
Exit
9:01
Mon 3

Starting off in Zork II

Zooming in makes play easier in dim light


Shallow Ford S: 0 M: 15
You are at the southern edge of a great cavern.
To the south across a shallow ford is a dark
tunnel which looks like it was once enlarged and
smoothed. To the north a narrow path winds among
stalagmites. Dim light illuminates the cavern.
>inventory
You are carrying:
A sword
A lamp
>

Points are awarded as you find treasures or achieve goals, and the total so far is displayed in the title bar of each game along with the current location. Mind you, actually finishing a game, let alone collecting maximum points, is a very noteworthy achievement with most of these adventures. Do persevere, though—I can promise there will come a time when you'll be standing at a party with somebody you've never met before, and you'll get into animated conversation about the solution to the 'Riddle cave' (in 'Zork II') or how to avoid being thrown out of the Vogon airlock (in 'The HitchHiker's Guide to the Galaxy').

Steve Litchfield

Infocom games on the 3a/3c

Series 3a/3c owners can enjoy all the Infocom games using a dedicated 3a/3c interpreter. The shareware version goes under the name of 'Infocom Interpreter', and is available from the usual shareware sources. The commercial version is available with a selection of 25 games for £39.95 from Interdata Developments (tel: 0161 7922871).

For more coverage see our review of 'The Lost Treasures of Infocom' in issue 3 and the 'Desert Island Games' roundup in issue 16.

FrotzS5

From: usual shareware sources

Availability: now (English only)

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: n/a

Price: FREE

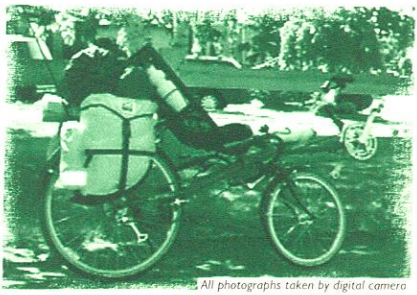
Quality:

Value:

Digital Re-Cycling

Our intrepid cyclist packs up his Psion once more...

by Alan Thwaits



All photographs taken by digital camera

Last year I offered *Palmtop* readers an account of the Tech-Nomad Tour, a two week cycling trip on which I used a Psion 3c and a cellular telephone to support my mobile computing habit. As both a 'cyclotour' and a computing test, the TechNomad Tour was a hard act to follow. For one thing it gave me some splendid riding, taking me across south-central Ontario, into Québec, and through New York state's Adirondack and Finger Lakes districts. For another, cycling with a palmtop computer and cellphone setup, supplemented by a digital camera, opened up all kinds of marvellous possibilities for mobile communications.

Connectivity headaches

There were glitches, of course, and learnings to be applied against future efforts. One was that communication depended on getting 'cell' access for the phone—something I found wasn't always possible in rural areas of New York state. Another constraint was that cell access limited me to a maximum transfer rate of about 9,600 bps—too slow to allow for efficient transfer of image files from the digital camera/3c hookup.

Well, what's a fellow to do but set out again—but with a different route, new tools, and more discoveries? For this year's June tour, I rode an all-Canada trip, setting out from my home near Toronto, and going north

along the spine of the Niagara Escarpment on the rugged Bruce Peninsula. From the northern tip of the Bruce, I took the Chi-Cheemaun ferry to Manitoulin Island, the largest fresh-water island in the world. The next couple of days saw me touring the rural roads of Manitoulin—large stands of pine and cedar, vistas of the white and pink quartz hills on the mainland's North Shore, and tiny villages tucked among the forests. Then I returned to the Bruce via the Chi-Cheemaun, and cycled home. Nine days of riding in all, a total of 1,093 hugely enjoyable kilometres.

Geared-up with cycling computer and GPS receiver

Gadgets galore

The new tools were a blast, too. Chief among them was a new bicycle. I've replaced my much-loved Miyata 1000LT touring bike with a recumbent bicycle, a 1998 Vision R-40. If you're looking for an example of great technology, this recumbent is it! On a 'bent, the rider sits on a chair, not a saddle, pedals feet-first, and—on my Vision, anyway—drops his arms to a convenient underseat steering setup. The result is vastly increased efficiency and comfort, allowing a cyclist to get much more distance out of a day's riding.

The other tools were upgraded too, though not without some of the glitches and compromises that come with most technological advances. On the 1997 TechNomad Tour I used a Psion Series 3c palmtop computer and a Motorola DPC650 cellphone to keep up my email and web access, as well as a Kodak DC25 digital camera to record the action. The camera came along on the 1998 trip. It's way below state-of-the-art nowadays (as you'll see from the quality of these photographs), but its plastic body and no-nonsense point-and-shoot capabilities are perfect for the rough and tumble of self-supported cyclotouring. I also brought along the cellphone for emergency use (thankfully, it was never needed for that).

But the Psion 3c long ago went to another owner, and since late last year I've been using a Series 5. As on last year's trip I used a home-grown spreadsheet to track daily distances, speeds and costs. I also used a Daily Diary template for my tour journal, an application I downloaded from Psion's *PocketInfo* web site (*www.pocketinfo.org*). And, of course, Message Suite v1.1 was my daily companion for sending and receiving email and browsing weather-related web sites. Trouble is, Message Suite won't work with

my cellphone, only with a landline connection. Seems that, when Psion developed the program, they configured it to work only with European-based (i.e. GSM standard) mobiles and not North American (CDMA and TDMA standard) phones. That incompatibility, though, was a moot point for this trip, given that I was once again heading for remote areas where cell access wouldn't be available. No access means no communication, so on this year's tour I took along the '5' with appropriate cable, and scrounged landline connections every day.

(A plea to the folks at Psion—can you make Message Suite work with my mobile phone? Being able to use my S5 with the Motorola cellphone would be a great boon, as it would get me back to true mobile communication. Not that people I met were averse to lending me a phone plug—in fact, I was never turned down—but being able to pass email and browse web sites from the road is kind of addictive!)

A new tool on this year's tour was a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit, the Garmin II Plus Touring Pak, designed specifically for touring cyclists. The GPS linked me to 24 geosynchronous-orbit satellites, and fed information about current position, speed and course, average and maximum speeds and current time. It also let me track where I'd been, entering waypoints for a possible return route. The Garmin GPS weighs only 225 grams and runs for about 10 continuous hours on four AA batteries—more than enough time for most days on the road. Linking the GPS via cable to my Series 5 allowed me to overlay information gathered by the GPS on my mapping software (Palmtop BV's *Route Planner*). It's certainly an odd feeling to cycle along a country road, knowing I'm linked to 24 satellites 'up there' somewhere. **See page 50 for more information on hooking your Psion to a GPS.**

The future...

What's next for the TechNomad? High on the list is a front fairing for the recumbent. Not only will that help increase my touring speeds, but it will also offer important weather protection on those long trips. And a friend has convinced me that video would make a nice addition to my toolkit—we're planning to mount a video camera on the recumbent's rear rack or in a pannier bag, attach a remote lens to my cycling helmet, and put a trigger on the handlebar. Long pans of great scenery at full speed will be the desired result. Then, it'll simply be a matter of editing video clips into AVI or MPEG format and uploading them to a web site for download or online viewing.

That leaves only the choice of a route for my next long TechNomad trip. Where to go? Not a problem—I've got (literally) a world of roads to choose from...

Alan Thwaits is a freelance technology journalist as well as a long-distance cyclo-tourist. Palmtop readers can catch up on his latest exploits via his 'Digital Cycling' web pages at:

www.praxcomm.com/cycle.htm

NEW FEATURE!

Starting up:
GPS receivers

In the first of a new-style tutorial series on popular Psion-related topics, Steve Clack answers some common questions on hooking your Series 3a/3c or Series 5 to a Global Positioning System

So what's a GPS?

GPS stands for *Global Positioning System*. A modern GPS receiver is roughly the size of a small mobile telephone, and will give a constant indication of your position, *anywhere* in the world, to an accuracy of about 15 metres.

How does it work?

In simple terms, it works by processing positioning signals received from satellites in orbit. 24 such satellites were set up by the US military, and the system is now available to anyone with a GPS receiver. Once you have bought the receiver there are no further charges—you don't have to make any kind of payment for use of the satellite system.

Does it really work anywhere?

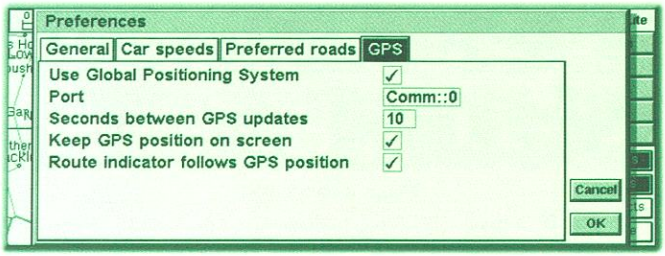
The system operates by 'triangulating' your position relative to the satellites, which are all in known positions at all times. Your receiver must be in direct line of sight to at least three of the 24 satellites in order to calculate your position accurately. Provided that you are out of doors (the signals won't pass through walls) then you should always be able to get a signal. The unit will also work in a car, provided that the receiver is placed reasonably close to a window, and that the window doesn't have a heating element in it.

But how does it display my position?

Earlier models would give a readout of the map coordinates on a small display, but recent ones have several display modes that can be set to display a map of your area, or a pointer that shows which direction you need to travel in to reach a pre-determined location, known as a *waypoint*.

But if it's a self-contained unit with its own display then where does my Psion come in?

Even the best models (currently) have only limited map information programmed into them, showing only major roads and cities. By attaching the GPS receiver to your



Setting GPS preferences in Palmtop BV's Route Planner on the Series 5

Series 3a/3c or Series 5/Geofox running suitable mapping software, it's possible to display a 'moving map' that shows your current position with a cross-hair target on the Psion screen.

So what do I need to connect everything together?

Any GPS receiver with a connection port that supports 'NMEA' protocols. NMEA is just a common 'language' that allows the GPS receiver and Psion computer to communicate.

How do I set this up on the GPS?

You'll need to consult the GPS manual. If you have a Garmin 3 then just go to 'Setup' under the main menu, move to the 'Interface' tab, and move the cursor onto the 'Format' option. Then press the 'Enter' key and select 'NMEA' from the five options available.

What about the cable?

Cables that go straight from a GPS to your Psion are available from only a few sources, notably Exportech (see page 110 for contact details). Otherwise you'll have to make up your own.

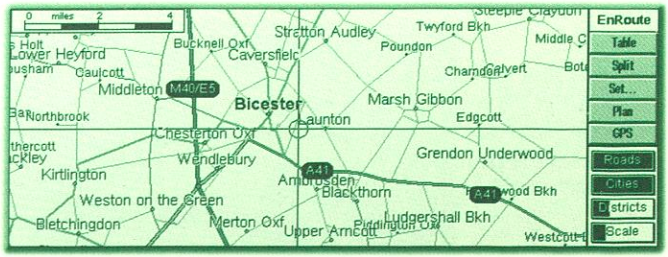
What software is compatible with all this?

All the major Psion mapping programs, such as *Route Planner* (formerly *En Route*), *Geographical Database* and *Psi-Mapper* have simple options to enable GPS tracking. Just connect the unit, enable the GPS using the appropriate menu option (usually something obvious like 'Use Global Positioning System'). Don't forget to switch off your link first, otherwise the GPS won't be able to use the RS232 (Serial) port.

What happens then?

Provided that the software supports it, the 'target' on the map will move as you change

We're in business! The GPS is connected, and the cross-hair cursor shows our current location!



your location, so you can drive or walk around with your location always displayed—provided, of course, that you are within the geographical boundaries of your mapping software.

But what if I go abroad?
The European version of Palmtop BV's excellent Route Planner software covers 17 countries if you buy the Series 5 version, with more modest options available on SSD for the Series 3 range. If you live (or want to travel) in America then the State-side version includes the USA, Canada and Mexico.

And outside those countries?
No GPS-compatible mapping software currently exists for countries outside Europe or America, though this may change in the future.

Do I have to set up anything else on the GPS?
Usually not. The Psion will take data from the GPS unit for information as and when it needs it, regardless of what 'mode' the GPS is in.

Can I just leave everything switched on and connected throughout my journey?
Provided that you have plenty of batteries. If left on continuously the GPS will probably consume a set of batteries about every 10 hours, and the constant use of the communications port will tend to shorten your Psion's battery life a little too.

How do I shut everything down?
Easy. Just exit the mapping software, switch off the GPS and Psion machines, then disconnect the cable at both ends.

Will the GPS work if I'm on a plane?
Possibly, if you can get the unit close enough to a window, though the airline may forbid the use of such devices while in flight.

Is there anything else I can do with a Psion and a GPS?
Other utilities are available to allow your Psion to store and catalogue GPS waypoints and tracklogs. See 'Further reading' below for more details.

Where can I buy a GPS receiver?
GPS's can be purchased from most major camping and outdoor suppliers, and the highly recommended Garmin models are also available from Exportech (see page 110). Be careful when choosing a GPS unit, not to go for the cheapest available, as low-budget models invariably have no (or limited) computer interfaces.

Further reading...

Further discussion of GPS principles appeared in 'Where the heck are we?' in issue 9, and full information on availability of GPS-compatible mapping software was included in 'Finding your way' in issue 14.

NEW FEATURE!

Working For a Living - The Musician

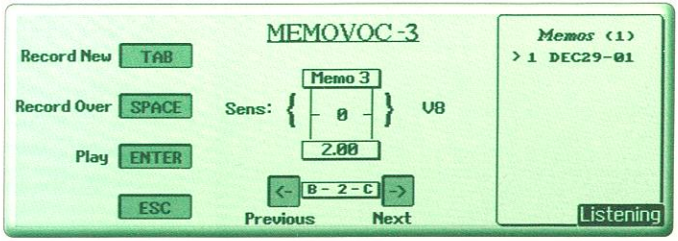
The first in a new series of articles looking at how Psion palmtops are used in real-life situations

by Steve Litchfield

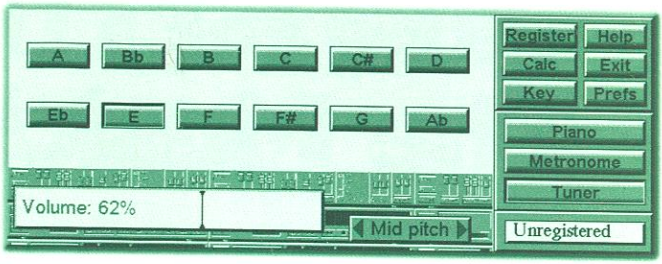
The marriage of modern technology to arts originating thousands of years ago is one that tends to work surprisingly well. In particular, musicians of all talents and commitments have often found their Psion to be an indispensable aid in their creative journey. Being one of the many Psion-owners who tinker around with musical instruments in their spare time, I can testify that I have tried all the programs mentioned herein at some point or other over the last 5 years.

Even without any third-party applications loaded, the portable nature of the Psion and the built-in software has much to offer the working musician. The microphone and digital recording facilities mean that a fragment of a tune need never be lost again. The Series 5's dictaphone buttons make it ideal for this as you can record with the case closed, but Series 3 owners can use *MemoVoc* to achieve a similar effect. Spur-of-the-moment lyrics can also be captured, transcribed in JOTTER or WORD for reworking later on. And song timings and track listings are perfect fodder for SHEET to manage.

Most of the specifically-musical software for the Psion family of machines seems to have been written out of necessity by the authors. In other words, they created a tool to suit their own needs and then wondered whether others would appreciate it as well. Whilst not very organised, this approach has led to an array of software which is extremely good at doing work in the real world.



Recording a tune for posterity with MemoVoc



Tuning my guitar's top E string with Piano on a Series 5

Glorious gadgetry

Musicians are infamous for carrying around collections of gadgets to do various jobs, so the sight of a pocket computer rarely raises an eyebrow. In fact, if anything, people will commend the simplicity of your approach, as much of the usual paraphernalia can be replaced by a single trusty Psion palmtop.

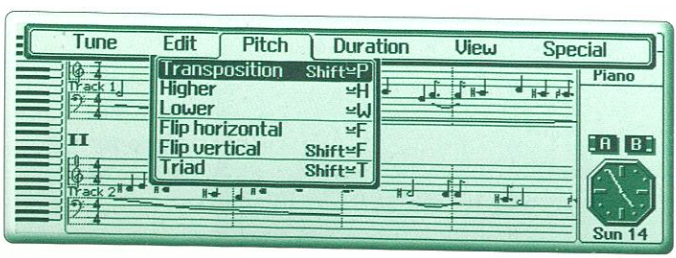
Tuning and timing

The most obvious function is a tuner of some kind, which is lucky as computers are extremely good at generating specific sound frequencies. You might think that with a microphone available it should be possible to sample a played note and provide a direct emulation of an automatic tuner, with flashing up or down indicators. Although several authors have attempted this task, the Psion's processor is not really up to the job and the results have never impressed me with their accuracy. Personally, I'd rather tune my instrument using a slightly more skillful method. Tuning by ear (comparing a Psion-generated note with that from the instrument) also has the advantage that I develop more of a musical ear and don't become lazy. Reliance on technology to do everything may one day let you down...

A metronome (displaying or sounding a particular tempo) is another candidate for replacement by a 21st century equivalent, although the Psion's sound system is unlikely to match the loud 'click' of a wooden unit.

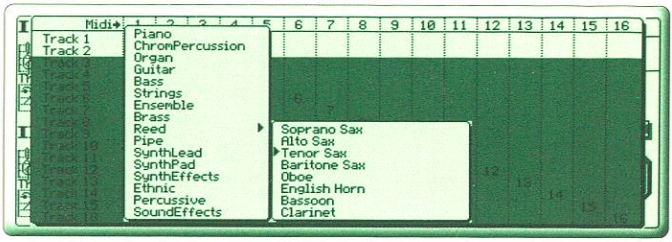
Striking a chord

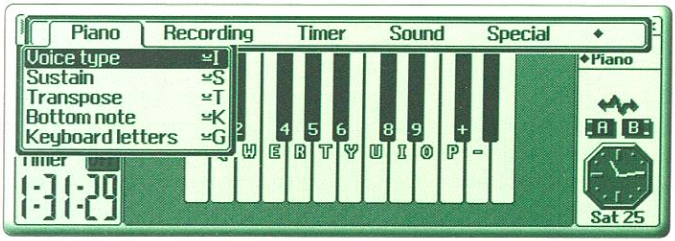
Guitarists and pianists will appreciate information on chord composition and finger positions; studio technicians will find a tempo calculator very useful; everybody would love a playable on-screen keyboard for roughing out possible melodies. For the serious musician a MIDI (the language modern electronic instruments use to talk to each other) connection between the Psion and the rest of an electronic set-up would also be ideal.



If only Mozart had been bought a Psion 3c with MusiPoc for Christmas...

Putting MusiPoc through its paces on a Series 3a





MusicBox's rather slick piano keyboard

Magnificent MusiPoc

In fact, most of the functions mentioned so far are quite possible on both Psion platforms. *MusiPoc* is definitely the most serious Series 3a/3c package, with such advanced features as MIDI tune importing or exporting and a keyboard interface based around 'proper' musical notation, with bass and treble clefs. Having entered a tune, its key can easily be shifted up or down as required—try doing that with pencil and paper!

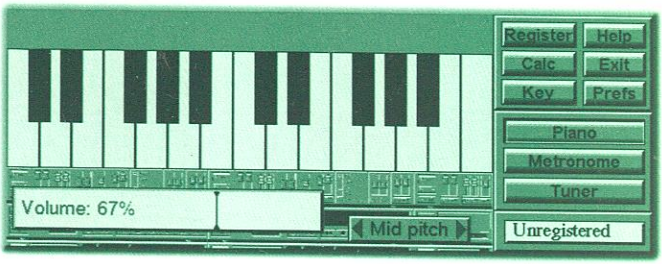
If you can play the tune well enough in real time, MusiPoc will even convert it automatically into sheet music. All that's left is to add any lyrics, and you won't be surprised to learn that MusiPoc allows this as well. If you need a professional package to construct multi-voice compositions for later export or printing out, this is the best place to start. Its learning curve is steep, but a degree of patience and hard work will pay dividends.

And something lighter...

If you're looking for something a little less formal, you'll find *MusicBox* a lot more fun. The musician's Swiss Army Knife, this utility is a combined timer, metronome, tuner and keyboard. The last item is the real star feature, offering a range of synthesised voices from the child-like 'Plonk' to the reed organ-like '8' & 4'' plus various sustain settings. Despite having to play notes using the QWERTY keyboard, MusicBox is as close to a real keyboard as you can get on the 16-bit Psion.

Playing my Piano

There isn't a version of MusicBox for the Series 5, at least not yet. Which is why Andrew Giddings and I knuckled down to create a similar utility package for EPOC. *Piano* is the result of our endeavours. Although we weren't able to match the range of voices of the Series 3a/3c (due to hardware restrictions), the fact that the on-screen



Piano: bringing the Psion keyboard bang up to date with pen control

keyboard can be operated with the pen makes the playing process far more intuitive. And Piano's metronome not only sounds a beep in time with the tempo, it also flashes the Series 5's red 'Record' LED, meaning that you can put the palmtop almost anywhere in a closed position and still get the benefit of the generated tempo.

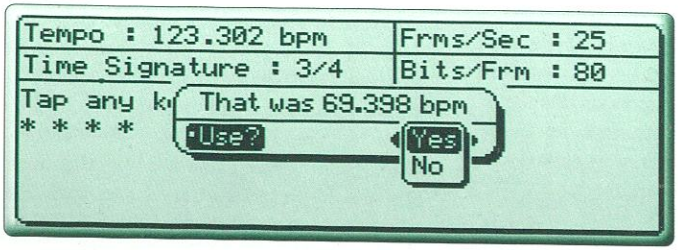
Tap-tempo

A common problem for the musician is working out the tempo of a known song. Piano for the '5' and *MusiCalc* for the 3/3a/3c both allow a feature called 'Tap-tempo', where you tap a key to the rhythm of a song for a few seconds and the program does all the calculations for you. Tap-tempo can be invaluable for those moments when a fellow musician is playing too slowly or quickly and you need concrete proof of their playing speed. MusiCalc also offers a range of specialist studio equipment calculations, such as digital delay times and tape speeds for specific tempos.

Unless you're a virtuoso (I'm most definitely not), you'll appreciate some help with chord information and fingerings. Guitar or Piano-playing Series 3a/3c owners are catered for very well here with *Chord* and *Piano Helper*. Each of these can display a diagram of a fret-board or keyboard (as appropriate) with the correct fingering, however obscure the chord. So nightmares such as *C# Augmented 7th* suddenly become a lot less frightening. Chord in particular is a fabulous tool for guitarists, with customisable chord-books for storing the fingering of chord groups that you find hardest to remember. For example, all the chords in a particularly tricky song can be laid out on a single screen. If you have a son or daughter still using your Series 3 Classic, you should note that a similar program called *Guitar Works* exists for the older machine.

Getting in tune

Another problem many musicians hit, whether professional or amateur, is that of having to tune to a particular 'master' instru-



Tapping out a rhythm in Musi-Calc on a Series 3 Classic

Chord, the guitarist's best friend

ment. Usually a keyboard of some kind, this may be (intentionally or otherwise) tuned to something other than a mathematically-perfect 'concert pitch'. Usually 440Hz, the frequency of A above middle C can vary by as much as plus or minus 15Hz. Both MusicBox and Piano cater for this effect by allowing you to fine tune your Psion keyboard and tuner to meet one of these real life anomalies.

Although Piano is currently the only music-related program for the Series 5, the higher-speed serial port and touch-screen should, in theory, make some much more ambitious software possible. There's absolutely no reason why we couldn't see a comprehensive composition, sequencing and MIDI-editing music suite on EPOC. Until it happens though, don't give away that Series 3a or 3c—slip it into your instrument case instead and make the most of some very useful software!

Software availability

Here's a list of the items mentioned in this article, and which Palmtop CDs they appear on (where applicable):

MemoVoc: v2 all CDs in \library\units, v3 commercial software from Estuary Technologies Ltd, tel: +353 87 2341694 (Ireland)

Piano: Steve Litchfield, CD03 onwards, in \library\s5misc

MusiPoc: Berthold Daum, all CDs, in \library\vault

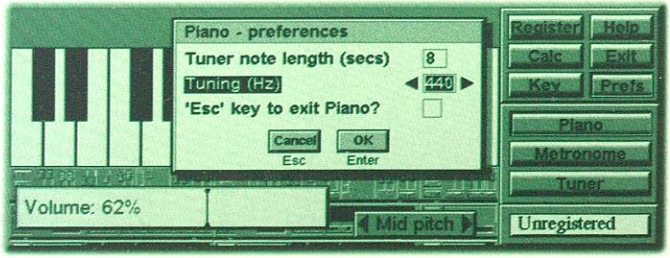
MusicBox: John Neale, all CDs, in \library\units

MusiCalc: Mark Smith, all CDs, in \library\vault

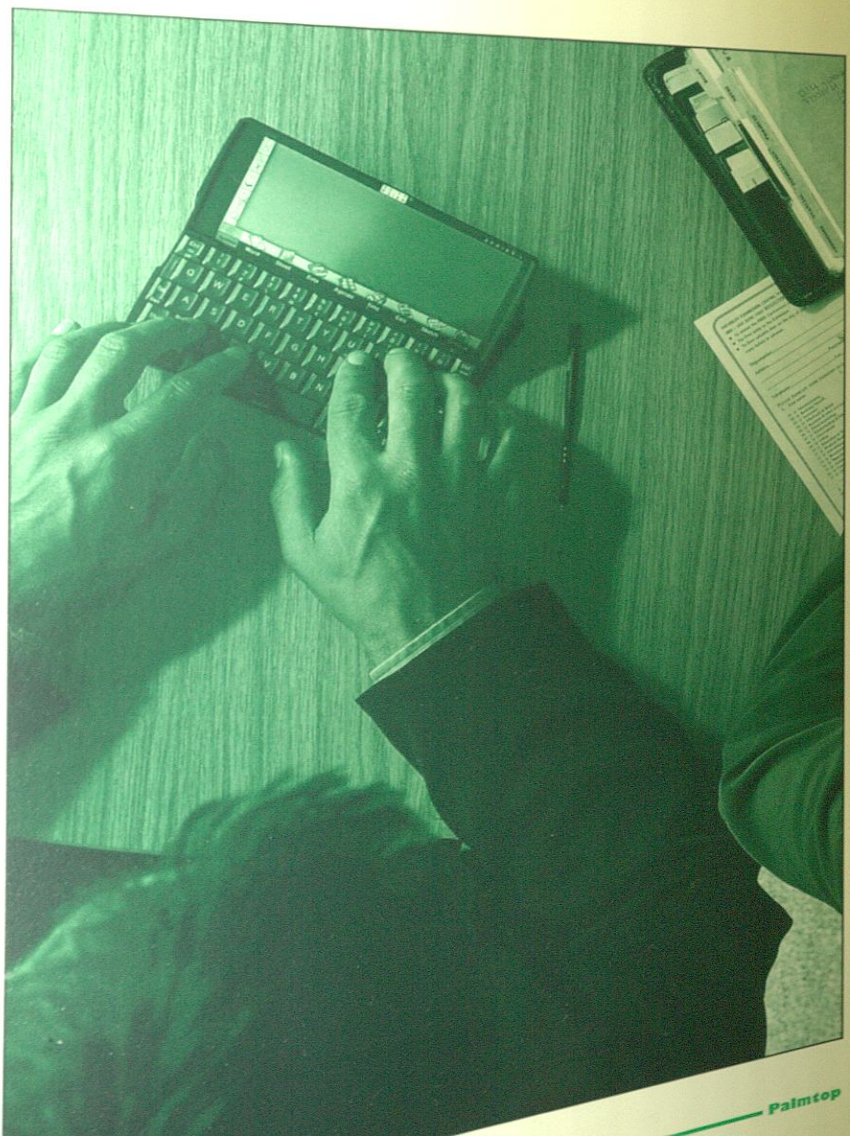
Chord: Graham Brand, all CDs, in \library\units

Piano Helper: Tim Kerber, all CDs, in \library\units

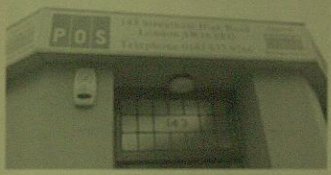
Guitar Works: Daniel Pope, all CDs, in \library\vault



Adjusting the Series 5 away from concert pitch



Waking up to POS



Pete Sipple takes a look around the UK's only independent Psion repair centre—Pinnock Organiser Services

By their very nature, our friendly little Psions are quite often at the sharp end of things. I've owned seven machines over the years and they've all been knocked, battered or bruised at some point. All but three of them have been back to Psion for repairs during their lifetime. I've never used the services of POS before, but I'd been aware of their existence as an independent Psion repair centre for some time. What I didn't realise is what else they can offer the Psion user. On an overcast July Wednesday I paid a trip to south-west London to see what makes them tick.

My first surprise came while I was waiting to be met by the manager. I'd reported to reception, announced myself and taken a seat. To my left sat a gentleman who recognised my name from *Palmtop*. We started chatting. *"Are you here waiting to have your machine fixed?"*, I asked.

"Oh no—they're loading Message Suite for me. I often come here for that kind of thing."

POS aim to offer more than just a repair service, they're a one stop Psion shop—as I went on to discover.

History

Paul Pinnock, the Director, is the driving force behind POS. Paul joined Psion in the early 80's as a service engineer, moving onto quality control and the training of other engineers, some of whom are still at Psion today. Paul saw the need for an alternative to Psion's own repair centre. A place with a central location, able to offer a wider range of services, including while-you-wait repairs. So was born Pinnock Organiser Services (now just POS) back in 1995. Working from a garage in Streatham for many years, Paul realised that more and more business was coming his way and that the time was right for expansion. Now POS is a growing business with an increasing customer base and an

The entire POS team (Paul Pinnock to left)

impressive shopfront on the Streatham High Road.

The POS team

Manager Melonie Antoine is Paul's number two and handles training, software installation, telephone support and data transfer.

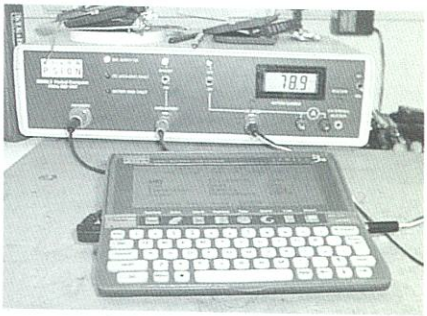
As a customer of POS you'll normally be dealt with by one of two smiling faces. Visitors and telephone callers are greeted by Yvonne Fanfair, while Shantelle Chevannes deals with the day's incoming postal casualties. Both work with an integrated database to ensure speedy processing and accurate billing.

In the workshop area, I sat with Engineer Thomas Gomez, who is also an ex-Psion employee. Trying not to distract Thomas too much, I watched avidly while he dissected a Series 3a to replace its shattered screen. Before skillfully stripping the unit down to its components, the entire contents of the machine was backed up so as not to lose the customer's precious data. Once repaired, the machine was connected to a piece of diagnostic kit which runs the Psion through a series of tests ensuring that the machine is in good health, before the data is restored and the unit returned to its anxious owner.

Cracked screen—ouch!

Booming business

The day of my visit was typical for POS. 17 damaged machines had been delivered with a variety of ailments, and five appointments had been made for drop-in visits. The mix is about an even split between business and personal customers, with a lot of repeat business. A user who's had a broken machine fixed may find themselves coming back again and again to make use of the other services POS have to offer. It's not uncommon for a celebrity or two to descend on POS, and a newspaper cutting displayed in reception from the Evening Standard newspaper praises them for being able to recover reporter Matthew Norman's vital database of 1200 phone numbers. POS have handled around 4000 machines over the last 12 months and their customer database is approaching the 10,000 mark. A file of letters



and emails from satisfied customers is proudly displayed in reception, an indication that they're clearly doing something right.

We'll fix it

I asked what POS could fix. "Just about anything Psion-related" was the answer. POS deal exclusively with Psion palmtops and are an approved Psion Service Centre—they get their parts directly from Psion. Most of the repairs appear to be on 3a's, but the whole range (including Workabouts and the old Organiser IIs) can be repaired. POS are also equipped to deal with the Series 5, although users are advised to go back to Psion for free repair under warranty within the first 12 months. Just about the only Psion item that they won't handle is the Travel Modem, which is dealt with solely by Psion Dacom.

While you wait...

Surely POS's strongest selling point is their turnaround speed. Last year I had to return my 3a to Psion after it fell victim to a little excess force on the hinges. Two weeks later it was delivered back to me. I'm fortunate enough to own more than one Psion and so my data was still with me. Most of us rely on our machines every day and losing it for a couple of weeks can be anything from inconvenient to downright unbearable. If you don't fancy the two week wait, and can get to London, a phone call to POS to make an appointment followed by a trip to Streatham can solve your problem within a matter of hours. Replacement of a case, fixed hinges or a new screen are all jobs that can be done in about one hour.

Many of POS's customers make use of this speedy service, and will sit and watch the hustle and bustle of the busy Streatham High Road from the comfort of POS's bright reception area. If you *do* ever visit POS then take a look at Paul's pride and joy, a display cabinet containing every model of Psion machine going back to the single-line Organiser I, including some one-off items from Paul's early days at Psion.

Returns by post or bike are normally turned around within 2-3 working days, and if you're concerned about your machine then a call to POS will update you on its progress.

Keep it safe

Protecting customer's data is an important part of what POS do. If a machine comes in containing data then every endeavour is made to keep that information safe. Despite the dangers, many users don't take backups and so disconnecting the vital battery power during repairs could wipe out years of data. Information was successfully recovered from a unit that had been run over by the owner's truck, but sadly nothing could be salvaged from one poor motorcyclist's machine that had slipped from his pocket and bounced down the road. The pile of metal and plastic was rushed to POS to be salvaged, but the vital RAM was not only wiped following disconnection from its power supply, but missing from the wreckage and probably still somewhere on the A40.

Other services

Keen to be seen as a one stop shop, POS have come up with some very useful services, the best of which has to be their Psion rental. Paul explained to me that one of the questions he's frequently asked is about upgrading to a Series 5. Psion's newest machine is not to everyone's taste, and from £25 per week POS will let you try one out to see if it meets

your needs. It's also possible to rent other machines in the Psion range, which is worth considering if you just can't live without your machine while it's being fixed.

Upgrade and exchange is also big business for POS. If you're outgrowing your Psion or are looking for a cheap 'spare' machine they can help. Processor and RAM upgrades can be carried out on-site, but a part exchange upgrade or a reconditioned machine is also worth bearing in mind. POS also sell new machines, software and peripherals, and offer the following other services:

- **Data transfer** - transferring your files from a Series 3a/c to a Series 5 can be stressful. If the idea scares you, get a price from POS first.
- **Getting onto the Internet** - POS can install the software, connect your hardware and train you on making the connection.
- **Software installation** – for non-techies. Let POS install and configure your new software purchases.
- **Telephone support** - complex technical calls to POS are chargeable, but many customers are happy letting POS talk them through problems with the personal touch.
- **Training** – Melonie looks after this side of the business and offers one-to-one training to suit customer's needs. Users are encouraged to write out a list of what they want to know, which means that the training is much more geared to 'need to know' than a structured course could ever be. Corporate and off-site training is also available.
- **ROM Upgrades** - POS have already received approval from Psion to undertake ROM upgrades on the Series 5. As and when the eagerly awaited version 1.1 becomes available, they're likely to offer a competitive and speedy upgrade.

Customers

Always keen for an amusing story, I asked Paul and Melonie for some anecdotes. Although it's clear that they've seen some amusing moments, they were very careful not to elaborate too much for fear that their customers would know they were being talked about—a reflection of the respect POS have for their clientele.

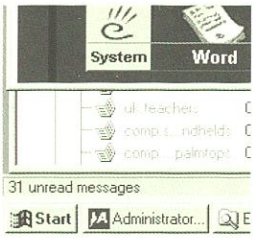
That having been said, there do seem to be some oft-seen faults that aren't actually faults. Many a time a dead screen turns out to be as a result of the contrast keys being fiddled with, or AGENDA data that was allegedly missing had simply been hidden as a result of the system clock being set to the wrong date. A less frequent misconception is that a Series 3's flashing 'B' is a low battery warning, rather than merely indicating the presence of an SSD in the B drive! Machines have also been returned in some unusual states, such as being drenched in beer (after showing off in the local pub), or reeking of perfume after a trip in a handbag.

I left the team at POS, chuckling to myself after being told that machines occasionally arrive still powered and containing the user's customised alarm sounds. The idea of an unopened jiffy bag bleating "Wake up you lazy @£$%&*!" is one that will keep me giggling for ages. You have to laugh!

Thanks to all at POS for making me feel so welcome.

See page 115 for POS contact details...

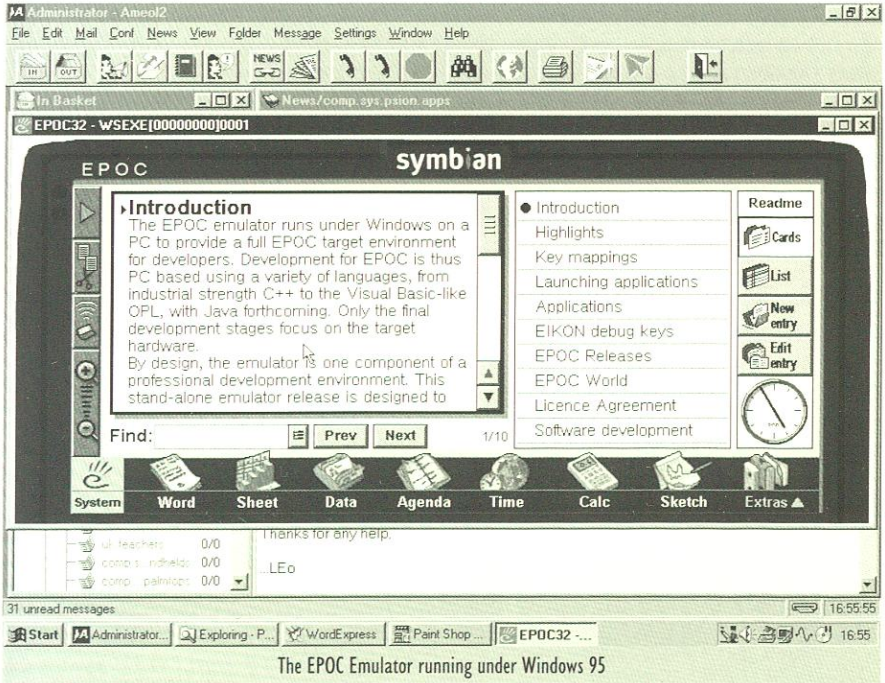
Series 5 EMULATOR —the facts



by Steve Litchfield

One of the most oft-requested programs in the past year has been the Series 5 'Emulator'. It has now been released, and the good news is that it's totally free. Mind you, the name is a bit misleading as it doesn't *really* emulate at all—let me explain.

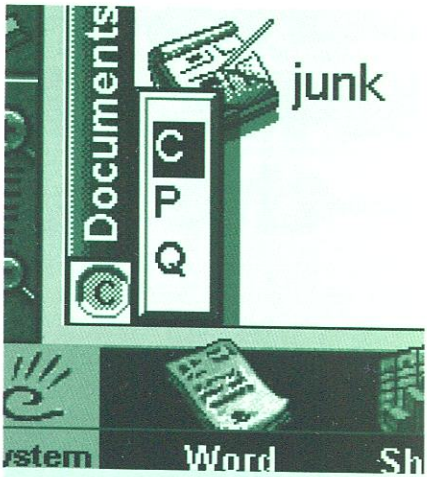
The original Series 3a Emulator took over your PC and emulated the whole Series 3a machine, meaning that virtually all software would run unchanged on this new 'virtual' 3a. It also meant that the Emulator didn't get on with the Windows operating system, which is not really surprising as the latter *also* tries to take over the whole PC.



The EPOC Emulator running under Windows 95

Emulate!

When EPOC (the Series 5's operating system—note that the Series 3's O/S is now officially called 'SIBO') was designed, the programmers took a different approach to the problem of writing software for a machine which (at the time) hadn't been built. With EPOC being written in a 'portable' programming language (C++), the opportunity existed not only to make versions for the ARM chip in the '5', but also to compile 32-bit versions for the PC's Intel processor as well. In effect, the new EPOC Emulator is a proper Windows 95 program, obeying all the rules, even to the extent that minimising the emulation system down to the task-bar makes it behave as though the virtual Psion has been switched off.



Adding your backed-up disks to the Emulator

All the standard built-in EPOC applications have been compiled for the PC and run quite happily under the Emulator, so there's no reason why you can't open up your address books, AGENDAs and spreadsheets on the PC and work on them with the bigger keyboard and screen. The installer puts in shortcuts which allow you to start up the system in several different screen sizes, and spreadsheets in particular benefit enormously from being run in a larger window.

The system is especially useful as a means of carrying on working should the unthinkable happen and your Series 5 need to be sent off for repair. Although you can't hang a PC from your belt, at least you can carry on working with all your critical files in their original forms until your precious palmtop is returned to you.

There's only one fly in all this wonderful ointment: because all code has to be recompiled for the PC's processor, only the supplied built-in applications will run properly at first. One of which is the OPL 'runtime' engine, which is why many OPL applications will

Working with your backups

The Emulator's programmers have provided a very quick way of accessing your precious backed-up files. Simply add a line as follows: `SET _EPOC_DRIVE_P=c:\Psion\Your Name\Backup\Internal` to your PC's AUTOEXEC.BAT and reboot. The next time (and every other time) you start the Emulator, you'll see a new disk drive ('P'), with all your Series 5 files intact. 'Your name', by the way, should be replaced by the name PsiWin uses for you to store its backups in the '\Psion' folder on your hard disk. This tip works well for CF disk as well, I've set mine to be the 'Q' drive with `SET _EPOC_DRIVE_Q=c:\Psion\Backup\Steve`. If you do access your backups from within the Emulator and want to make changes to any file, it's probably a good idea to copy the file to the 'C' drive first. Doing this will prevent PsiWin from complaining about your tampering with its backup dates and times!

Getting programs working

Most shareware and freeware programs are written in OPL/32 and can be made to work under the EPOC Emulator with a modicum of effort. The two most common 'advanced features' that applications use are the `Toolbar.opo` and `Sysram1.opx` modules, both of which were missing from Symbian's initial release of the Emulator.

Toolbar.opo

This (as you'll surmise from the name) allows programs to use a standard EPOC toolbar and can be copied if necessary from your Series 5. If you can't find this file, just create a new 'Program' document in any folder and use the 'Create standard files' command. `Toolbar.opo` will then magically appear in the current folder and can be copied across to `\epoc32\release\wins\deb\z\system\opl`

Sysram1.opx

This is a standard Psion-written module that gives OPL programs extra system-related functions. Although there is a file of the same name compiled for the ARM chip in the Series 5, the compiled-for-PC version you may need for the Emulator can either be downloaded from the 3-Lib web site or from Palmtop CD04 (in the `\library\S5prog` folder). Once obtained, put a copy in `\epoc32\wins\c\system\opx`

Both the above modules should be present in the revised Emulator, downloadable from Symbian's EPOC World web pages by the time you read this article.

It's worth noting that there are several other common OPXes that have been written by third-parties. Many of them are being compiled for the PC by their authors at the moment and should be available shortly. Again, just place the modified OPX files in the same folder as `Sysram1.opx` above. A word of caution, though. Once you've set up your PC-compiled OPXes correctly, make them 'read-only' and take backup copies before going any further. The installation of further applications might overwrite your new PC OPXes with Series 5 versions and you'd then need to copy the correct ones back before you could run programs successfully again.

work properly too, as long as they don't use any specialised OPXes that have been compiled for the Series 5's ARM chip (see 'Getting programs working' above). Programs written in C++ (usually commercial applications, e.g. Route Planner, Money, etc.) will not work at all.

Up until July 1998 the emulation system was known as 'WINS' and had only been available as a development tool as part of a subscription to one of Psion's developer clubs, but it will hopefully be available on *Palmtop CD04* onwards or as a 4MB download from *www.symbian.com* as a demonstration of the richness of EPOC and its applications.

A useful tool

Although not a replacement for a *real* Series 5 or GeoFox One, and not able to run all the software you've gathered over the last year, the EPOC Emulator is still an extremely useful tool to have loaded on your PC, both for day-to-day use and emergencies.

And for Series 3a/3c users...

A serviceable Series 3a Emulator has long been available. See Stephen Murgan's article on page 98 (or Pete Sipple's full article in issue 3) for more details.

FOR SALE, WANTED, ETC...

ITEMS FOR SALE

Series 5 (8MB, ENGLISH) with original PsiWin CD, lead and manual. Unboxed but rarely used and in excellent condition - £325

Contact: Dr Duncan MacDermid
Tel/fax: 0191 4163213

Series 5 (8MB) with mains adaptor, leather case and PsiWin. Boxed, as new (six weeks old) - £350

Contact: Carl on 01902 604515

Series 5 (not yet registered), including PsiWin 2.1, Simple Technology 4MB CF card, mains unit, parallel link, zip case, pen pack, screen protectors. £500 the lot.

Also, Cyclone disk drive for 3a (including mains adaptor) - £80, 1MB flash SSD - £55, 512K RAM SSD - £55, Notepad deluxe (floppy disk) - £20, Purple Software 3a Chess - £15, Psion Games 3a - £5.

Contact: Alan Baldwin on 01282 772525, ext. 416 (7:30am-4:30 pm Mon-Thurs)

Series 3a (2MB), leather case, parallel link cable, PsiWin 1.0, all in mint condition, boxed with manuals - £100.

Contact: Ian Pollen on 01843 861248 or 0468 175142 (mobile)

Series 3c (1MB) with leather case, 1MB flash SSD, Autoroute Express and PsiMail Internet. Very good condition with manuals, etc. - £250 ono.

Contact: Tommy Menzies - 0131 4453928 or email: *tmenzies@netcomuk.co.uk*

Series 3c (2MB backlit) - Brand New !! (Preloaded with OPL database and 3a Task Manager and with 2 year extended warranty), also PsiWin and serial link cable, leather case, AC adaptor, Widget Games (SSD), 3a Chess (SSD). All boxed and with manuals including Programming manual - £240.

Contact: Vern Rakkar on 0181 737 1865 (home) or 0181 326 66033 (work) email: vern.rakkar@aspentech.com

Series 3a/3c software: Paint & Compose - £32, Chess - £18, Pipemania - £18, Games 3a - £32. All software on SSD, and supplied with original packaging and manuals, all software in excellent condition- £100 for everything.

Contact: Daniel Sissman on 0113 2685887 (England) (evenings and weekends) or email: DanielsPsionSoftware@Compuserve.com

NEW FEATURE!

THREE for all

Stephen Murgan examines some highlights from the 3a/3c world

Recent issues of *Palmtop* have seen an increase in the amount of Series 5-specific articles and reviews, and a corresponding drop in the amount of new software available for the Series 3 range. We'll be using this new regular spot as a forum to discuss some of the best Series 3 software and other products, even though some of them have been around for a while now.

Three versus Five

When the Series 3 machines came out all those years ago the general reaction was "Wow". It was ahead of its time, and years ahead of the competition in terms of usability, portability and expandability. That little gadget soon became much more than the sum of its parts, replacing the day planner, alarm clock, to-do list, calculator and, in some cases, even the wrist watch.

The ability to write programs on this little beast made it even more useful, and before long a whole slew of third-party applications became available to fill in many of the gaps in functionality that Psion missed—and some that they could not have even dreamed of when they first designed the machine.

Over the following five years, new versions were basically expansions and variations of the same basic theme: a bigger screen, more memory and a faster processor, but still the same basic architecture. In the final analysis, this is the best possible testament to an excellent design.

The Series 5, like so much new hardware these days, was heavily hyped. Not by Psion, I hasten to add, but by enthusiasts like ourselves, excited by the advent of a next-generation product.

Rumours abounded, particularly across that ultimate electronic grapevine, the Internet. The new machine would have a 'soft' modem, it would have a full-sized VGA colour screen, it would have built-in Internet connectivity out of the box, it would make the tea... Like a lot of hardware that is subject to such rampant speculation, when it finally hit the street some of us found it something of a disappointment.

Again I am not criticising Psion—after all, there is only so much you can do with a pair of AA batteries—but our expectations were perhaps a tad higher than it was possible to meet. Operating system shenanigans and tales of peeling paint and 'stuck stylus syndrome' that ensued shortly after the

release of the S5 did not exactly help to engender confidence, particularly with all the other machines out there vying for our hard-earned cash.

In spite of all sorts of extra goodies (including touch screen, voice recording buttons and a truly excellent keyboard) the Series 5 is still essentially an evolution. That is not to say that it is not better: it is obviously a more *advanced* machine, as many happy Series 5 users will attest. True, the hardware architecture is new (and incompatible with) much of the old stuff, but when you get right down to it, it is still doing essentially the same job as its predecessor.

As a fully paid-up member of the ancient and noble order of Gadget Freaks, I must confess that the new machine is a very nice (dare I say 'sexy'?) piece of kit. If I were in the market for a new machine now I would seriously consider the Series 5, but at the moment it offers me little extra functionality for a lot of extra money.

If I were a professional journalist or a touch-typist I could probably justify getting one—the major shortcoming of the Series 3 is the keyboard, which is not really designed for large amounts of typing, but for the average two-thumbs *Joe User* like me what really counts is the software. The lack of an outliner in the word processor alone serves to put me off. Besides, with a computer at work and another at home the S5's keyboard is not *that* big a deal to me.

I think that if my Series 3a broke tomorrow, my first impulse would be to seek another used 3a. It would work with all of the hardware, software and data files that I have amassed over the years. It would also be cheaper...

To put it bluntly, for me the S5 does not offer enough new functionality to justify the cost. Add a colour screen and some kind of built-in modem and I might spring for it, but at the moment it's a lot of money for a cooler way of doing what I am doing now with a new learning curve (albeit gentle) to boot. Or reboot.

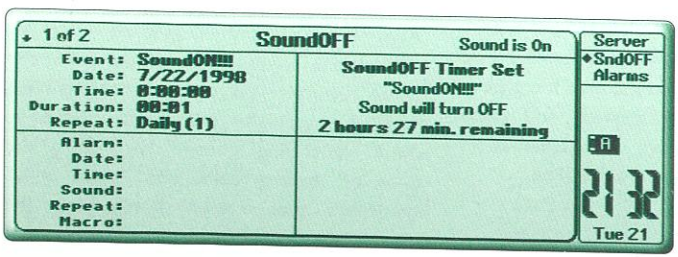
I'm sticking to the Series 3 for the foreseeable future. *It works for me.*

My favourite programs

In future 'Three for all's I'll examine some of the more noteworthy S3 software that's emerged over the years, but to kick off I hope you'll forgive me the self-indulgence of discussing my *personal* favourites, including some unexpected additions...

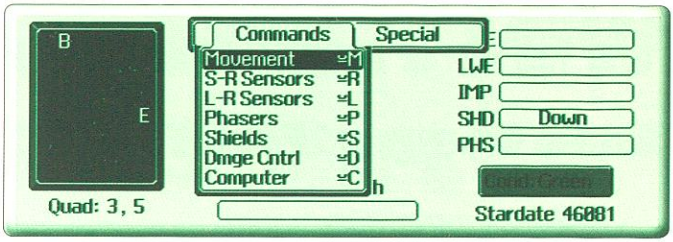
JBStopGo

I have been using a 3a for so long that my 3-Link connection cable came with the original DOS MCLink program—I didn't even know



Get in control of your alarm sounds with Server

Phasers at the ready...



of the existence of RCOM until it was obsolete. Although I have PsiWin I still prefer to use MCLink as I find it somewhat faster. JBStopGo makes backing up with MCLink a snap. If connected it closes all applications, remembering which ones were open, and then opens the link. If disconnected, it reverses the process, shutting down the link and re-opening all of the applications that it closed earlier. This certainly makes backups easier.

Server

This is a crippled demo version of a fuller-featured program. One of its many features is that it can be set to turn the sound off for a specified period of time. I use it for switching the sound ON, thus avoiding oversleeping after turning the sound off the evening before—a common failing.

StarTrek

This small (12K) program by Tim Begley is modelled on the ancient Trek games written for the TRS-80 and other early machines. Simple graphics and turn-based gameplay encompass all your favourite Star Trek elements. Shields up!

Reader

Written by Barry Childress, this program comes in two parts: a PC compression program that turns text files into 'e-books', and an e-book reader program that runs on the Psion. Very useful for reference information that needs to be kept to hand, a good way to deal with all those README files that I resolved to read, sometime, and an excellent way to handle all those classic books and poems that are freely available on the Internet. Thanks to this little program I have become acquainted or reacquainted with such wordsmiths as Jack London, H G Wells, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Longfellow to name but a few, and the Psion is far more convenient (at least to me) than a book.

Software availability

Here's a list of the items mentioned in this article, and which Palmtop CDs they appear on:

JBStopGo: John Boyce, all CDs, in \library\vault

Server: Pelican Software, all CDs, in \library\vault

StarTrek: Tim Begley, all CDs, in \library\vault or \library\games (depending on CD no.)

Reader: Barry Childress, all CDs, in \library\units

WIN a FREE 4MB flash SSD or 32MB CompactFlash!!

Whether you're a Series 3a/3c or Series 5 user, you can expand the capacity of your Psion computer by winning either a Psion 4MB flash SSD or a Simple Technology 32MB CompactFlash—you choose which prize you want.

Just answer the three questions (below), and send your answers on a postcard to Palmtop Publications, PO Box 188, Bicester DO, Oxfordshire OX6 0G, ENGLAND.

We can only accept entries by postcard, and all postcards must be clearly labelled COMPETITION 19. Any entries received by means other than postcard will be discarded.

All entries must reach us by 14th September 1998, and the winner will be notified on the following day.

Question 1: Nokia is one of the Symbian partners. In what country are they based?

Question 2: What do the initials SIBO stand for?

Tie breaker: What particular ***new*** piece of equipment do you think Alan Thwaits should take on his next Technomad tour? (The most interesting or humorous answer will be chosen). Answers to be judged by the *Palmtop* editorial panel, and all decisions are final.

Last issue's winner: Mr D Hutchings, Woking, Surrey

Real world OBJECTS (part 2)

A beginners' guide to embedding on the Series 5

by Mark Moody

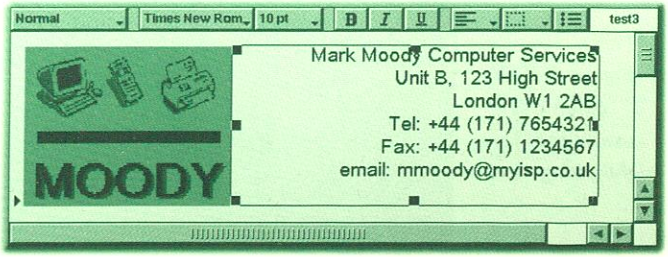
In the last issue I introduced the idea of embedding objects and suggested a few simple applications. It's now time to see how all this technology can help in the composition of a real-world document.

The goal is to produce a company letter template that can be used for quotes, invoices and the like. Top-left should be the company logo and mirroring it on the top-right will of course be your full contact details. Further down the letter can be a shaded and bordered paragraph giving details of a special offer, white-on-black headings for extra effect and perhaps a scanned-in photo. A table is a good way to present any facts and figures and a digitised signature will finish things off nicely.

Getting started

This list of requirements would tax a desktop word processor, never mind a Series 5, but by being creative you can achieve them all. Although EPOC's WORD is highly graphical it doesn't support proper text-wrapping round graphics or other objects and this will be the biggest restriction. In other words, you can only have a single line of text beside an object. You'll hit this problem immediately at the top of the letter when trying to put four or five lines of contact detail beside the company logo.

There's a fairly easy workaround of course—and guess what—it involves yet more objects. The idea is to use two (or more) objects side by side on the same line. The logo in this example (see below) can be done as a SKETCH object and the contact details as



SKETCH and SHEET objects sitting side by side

right-justified text within several rows of a SHEET object. Note that the total formatted width of the two objects should be less than the printable width of the standard page, to avoid the printing process splitting the two objects onto separate lines. If you uncheck the 'Wrap to screen' menu option, WORD will use a proper WYSIWYG mode, making it easier to judge object widths more accurately. If you find that your two side-by-side objects appear one below the other instead, keep reducing the size(s) until they pop back onto the same line.

Although it's possible to use the 'Format object' command to adjust the sizes of the objects, that job is usually far better done by altering each object directly. For SKETCH, just use its 'Resize sketch' command and for the SHEET object try experimenting with the column widths used. Be aware that when embedding a spreadsheet the Series 5 will always include everything between the top left of the worksheet (cell `A1`) and the bottom right corner of the area used. Always start the embedded data at cell `A1` to avoid unwanted gaps.

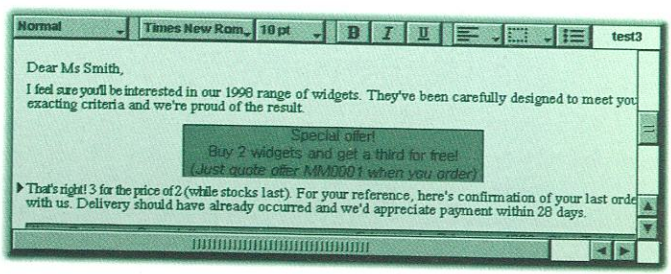
If you *do* use the 'Format object' command then be careful to keep the 'Scaled height' and 'Scaled width' values the same, otherwise the object will be stretched out of shape, spoiling its appearance.

Experimentation is the key

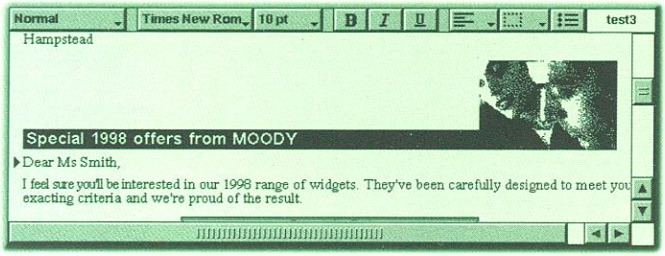
As a guide, the screenshot on the previous page shows a SKETCH object 58mm wide and a SHEET object 91mm wide, but every set-up is different and you'll need to experiment once again. In particular, WORD seems quite temperamental as to when it puts in lines and borders round objects. Remember, you don't have to do this experimentation every time you write a letter—you're setting it up here as a template to be used over and over again.

The next object in our example is the shaded 'special offer' box as shown in the screenshot below. This one's easy—it's just a SHEET object with one column and as many rows as needed, all shaded light grey. By selecting (i.e. highlighting) all the cells you've used, you'll be able to manipulate them all in one go. Centring the text in the column usually looks very good in this sort of situation. If you want a border round the edge of the shaded area, either go into the 'Border...' option under the 'Format' menu in SHEET and set 'Outline of ranges', or select an outline style from the drop-down border tool on the top toolbar.

Getting white on black text is normally impossible in WORD, but using the magic of 'objects' you can get almost any effect you choose. By inserting a SHEET object you can type heading text into the first cell. It's possible to achieve the same look as in the


Normal
Times New Rom
10 pt
test3
Dear Ms Smith,
I feel sure you'll be interested in our 1998 range of widgets. They've been carefully designed to meet you
exacting criteria and we're proud of the result.
Special offer!
Buy 2 widgets and get a third for free!
(Just quote offer MM0001 when you order)
That's right! 3 for the price of 2 (while stocks last). For your reference, here's confirmation of your last orde
with us. Delivery should have already occurred and we'd appreciate payment within 28 days.

A shaded SHEET column is a useful tool for highlighting text


Normal
Times New Rom
10 pt
test3
Hampstead
Special 1998 offers from MOODY
Dear Ms Smith,
I feel sure you'll be interested in our 1998 range of widgets. They've been carefully designed to meet you
exacting criteria and we're proud of the result.

A single-celled SHEET and SKETCH object used to good effect

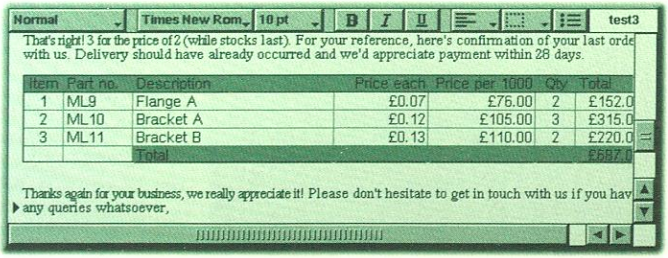
screenshot above by using the top toolbar in SHEET to set the cell shading as black and then select from the 'Other' tab under 'Format|Font...' to set the text colour as 'White'. As it's supposed to be a heading, why not increase the font size and make the text bold at the same time? You can also extend the width of the cell to give an attractive 'title bar' effect.

For maximum effect, you may wish to include a photo in your document. Issue 18's 'Hi-Tech Hi-Fi Heaven' article detailed ways to move pictures from a desktop machine to a Series 5.

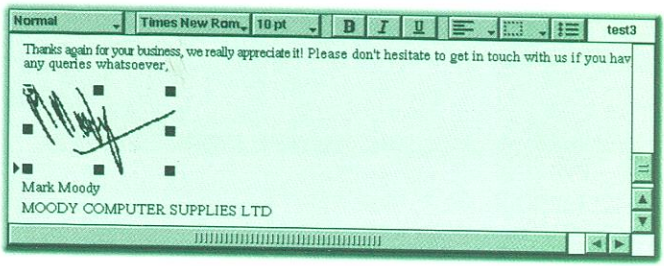
Useful in a letter and essential in a quotation or invoice, a nicely-formatted table is the next challenge. Again this should be done with a SHEET object, but there are a few tips to consider. Firstly, item and quantity columns sometimes look better centred, while part numbers and descriptions are always left-justified and prices always formatted as 'Currency' and right-aligned. Note that if you're setting the properties of a rectangular range of cells they can be highlighted by dragging the pen or by using the [Shift] and arrow keys as usual. If you're changing just one column or row then highlight the whole lot together by tapping on the grid heading letter or number.

Another thing to remember is that you're not only using SHEET as a tool to get well laid out text—it's also a fully-featured spreadsheet. This means that you can embed formulae to do much of the work. For example, the table might list each of your products, with unit prices set up, ready to enter quantities. Once entered, the sub-totals and grand total are calculated automatically. By then tapping on the 'Done' button you'll find yourself back in the letter with the table completed and ready to print.

SKETCH is the last object you might want to bring into play, perhaps by inserting a signa-


Normal
Times New Rom
10 pt
test3
That's right! 3 for the price of 2 (while stocks last). For your reference, here's confirmation of your last orde
with us. Delivery should have already occurred and we'd appreciate payment within 28 days.
Item Part no. Description Price each Price per 1000 Qty Total
1 ML9 Flange A £0.07 £76.00 2 £152.0
2 ML10 Bracket A £0.12 £105.00 3 £315.0
3 ML11 Bracket B £0.13 £110.00 2 £220.0
Total £687.0
Thanks again for your business, we really appreciate it! Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you hav
any queries whatsoever,

SHEET-generated tables are very adaptable


Normal
Times New Rom
10 pt
test3
Thanks again for your business, we really appreciate it! Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you hav
any queries whatsoever.
Mark Moody
MOODY COMPUTER SUPPLIES LTD

A SKETCH signature adds a nice finishing touch

ture. The trickiest part of doing this is getting a realistic likeness using just the Series 5 pen. For many people the light weight of the stylus and the angle of the screen mean that their normal signature is very difficult to reproduce. Do persevere though—it may take 20 tries to get it right, but this letter is going to be saved as a template for frequent re-use. You may find that your handwriting is better reproduced by using one of the heavier third-party styli, such as the Widget DuoPen.

I've mentioned templates several times above, and there are three ways to avoid redoing all this work each time you want to achieve similar effects. The techniques have been covered before in *Palmtop*, so briefly they are to either to save as a read-only file (which you can 'Save as' as necessary), to save this letter as 'C:\System\Apps\Word \Normal' (it becomes WORD's default start-up document), or to use the freeware utility *Stationery Pad* (which allows a dozen or so different template types).

A final word of caution. If you experiment a lot with the methods outlined above, please make sure you save your file regularly. WORD on the Series 5 is a complex application and all this extra work might just cause the odd file crash. By saving regularly you'll avoid the frustrations of ever having to redo important work.

Objects are here to stay in EPOC. If you take the time to become their master, they'll serve you well.

A print preview of the final document

How to connect your Psion to the Internet

by Pete Sipple

Part three of our beginners' guide to setting up your Series 3a/3c or Series 5 for email and World Wide Web access

If you've worked through the first two parts of this feature then you should have got the basic principles of getting connected and have a compatible modem and all the hardware that you need to get your palmtop wired to the Internet. In this instalment we'll look at signing up with a service provider, setting up your software and connecting for the first time.

Internet Service Providers

An Internet Service Provider (ISP) is your gateway to email and the World Wide Web. Using your modem, you dial a telephone number given to you by your ISP and you're then connected (via them) to the world. If you already have an Internet account, perhaps at work or on your home PC, you may be able to use that with your Psion. Otherwise you'll need to pick (and sign up with) one of the many ISPs available.

When looking for an ISP the advice is to shop around, but bear the following in mind:

- **Cost**: some ISPs charge connection time by the hour, while others allow unlimited access for a fixed monthly fee, normally billed to your credit card. Don't forget you have to add the cost of your telephone calls too. Many providers offer a free trial period, so try to take advantage of this before paying any money.

  As a general rule, expect to pay an average of about £10 per month in the UK, plus about the same again on your phone bill.

- **Services**: at the moment you can only email or surf the web using a Psion, so almost all ISPs will do. If you want to hook-up your PC to the Internet too then look for an ISP with some free web space in case you want to make your own web pages in the future, as well as an ISP which allows faster modems to connect (i.e. 56K access).

- **Access**: make sure that the ISP will let you dial into the Internet using a local-call rate. In the USA, and with some cable companies, it's possible to make free calls to your ISP. Sending emails only takes a minute, but when surfing it's easy to

forget how long you've been online. If you're planning on travelling make sure that your ISP has numbers in other countries.

- **Support**: with the main ISPs, setting up your account on a Psion is fairly straightforward, but it's a good idea to phone the technical support team *before* signing up. If they've never heard of Psion or can only advise you if you're running their Windows software, then try another company.

Specific ISPs

A selection of ISP telephone numbers can be found on page 80. Here are some caveats to bear in mind before deciding:

Cheaper calls...

If your telephone company runs a discount scheme for frequently dialled numbers, (i.e. in the UK, BT's 'Friends and Family'), don't forget to include your ISP's number to help keep the costs down.

- **PsionWorld** - although mentioned by name in past issues of *Palmtop* and in Psion's own literature, it appears that the PsionWorld network is no longer available in its original form.

- **CompuServe** – if you want to email from your Psion with CompuServe then you may have some configuring to do. The CompuServe mail system is proprietary, which makes it impossible to connect to their normal email system. You can make CompuServe's email system 'talk' to a Psion by setting up a POP3 mail account, though the exact details are too involved for us to go into here. If you get online then consult *5alive.psionking.com/Archives/Reviews/emailcis.htm* for further instructions.

- **AOL** – if you want to use AOL with your Psion then think again. They use a totally proprietary system which won't work with your Psion.

- **Others** – if you're in doubt whether a service provider can be accessed from your Psion then ask their technical support department whether they support TCP/IP. Some ISPs are easier to set-up than others. Psion supply 'templates' which contain most of the set-up information. By default the following templates are supplied:

  UK: Demon Internet, UUNet/Pipex, BT Internet, CiX, CompuServe, Easynet (3a/3c), I-Way (3a/3c).

  US: AT&T Worldnet, Netcom, Prodigy Internet, CompuServe.

Selecting your ISP and telephone number

Wizard: Selecting a service provider
First, select the service provider that manages your Internet
Select service provider template
·Service provider ← PsionWorld →
·Access point UK, Local rate
·Access ☎ number 44 (0)845 0801000
Esc

New Zealand: Clearnet, CompuServe, Earthlight, IBMnet, ICONZ, IHUG, Iprolink, Netlink, Telecom XTRA, Voyager.

Singapore: Cyberway, PacificNet, SingNet.

Ireland: Indigo Dublin, IOL Dublin.

Setting up the software

You'll need to know the following information before making the connection. If you have a 'template' for your ISP then many of the settings will be there for you. If you don't know them, you'll need to contact your ISP.

(a) A telephone number for your Psion to dial.

(b) Your user name and password.

(c) Your email address.

(d) Your mailbox (email) user name and password (if different to your main ISP user name/password).

(e) Incoming email server address (POP3) - (e.g. 'mail.psionworld.net').

(f) Outgoing email server address (SMTP) - (often the same as your incoming address).

(g) In rare cases, you may also need to know your 'IP' and ISP's 'DNS' addresses. You may also be told a 'protocol', usually 'PPP'.

On a Series 3a/3c

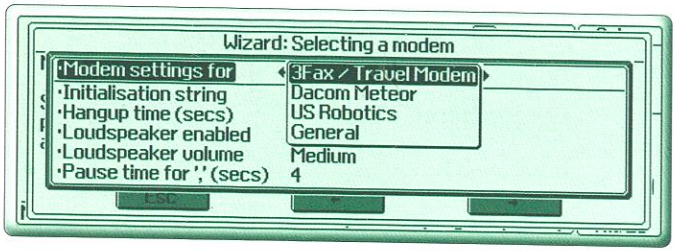
Before you do anything else, go to your System screen, press [Psion]-[L] and make sure your link is set to 'None'. Your modem may not connect if the link is already on. Once you've checked that your link is off, go to the set of icons we created in the last instalment and select the 'Setup' option.

For each of the following headings, go into the appropriate option from the Setup screen:

1. **Provider**: Select the ISP you want to use.

2. **Communications**: Select your modem by pressing [Tab]. For the vast majority of modems the default settings should be fine, but we'll include some troubleshooting tips in the next instalment for those with troublesome modems.

   There is also an option labelled 'Port Settings'. Again, the defaults should be enough to get you connected. I'd recommend changing the 'Speed' setting to the next number higher than your modem



Selecting the Travel Modem

If calling from the office then don't forget to add a '9'

speed, (i.e. set a 14,400 modem to 19,200).

3. **Dialling**: if you're at home then the default settings will be correct. If you're dialling from work or another country you need to add a dial-out code (e.g. 9). To do this, change 'current location' to 'office', then move to 'Location Details' and press [Tab]. Press [Tab] again on 'Dialling details' and insert a 'dial out' code of '9,' (the comma inserts a pause after the 9, which some switchboards require).

4. **Setup**: Press [Tab] to get to each screen of settings: **Provider settings** – see (a) on page 77, **Server settings** – see (g), **Mail settings** – see (c) to (f), **Account settings** – see (b) and (g), **Connection script** – see notes on login scripts on the next page.

On a Series 5

Go to your system screen, press [Psion]-[L] and make sure your link is set to 'Off'. Your modem may not connect if you don't.

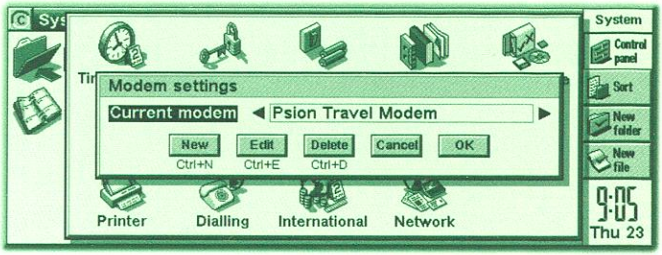
From the system screen, press [Ctrl]-[S] for the 'Control panel'. You will find an icon for each of the following settings:

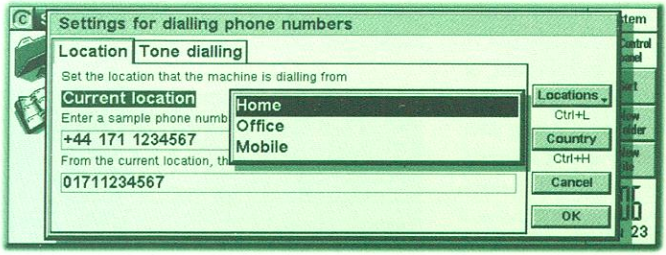
1. **Modems**: select your modem type. Pressing the 'Edit' button will allow you to change settings, but for the moment stick with the defaults.

2. **Dialling**: select either 'Home' or 'Office'. Pressing the 'Locations' button will allow you to edit your location. If you're at work you may need to go to the 'Dial out' tab and add a '9,' (note the comma) for an outside line. Some switchboards require the comma, so leave it in.

3. **Network**: select the name of your ISP and press 'Edit', or press 'New' for an unlisted ISP. There are four tabs to

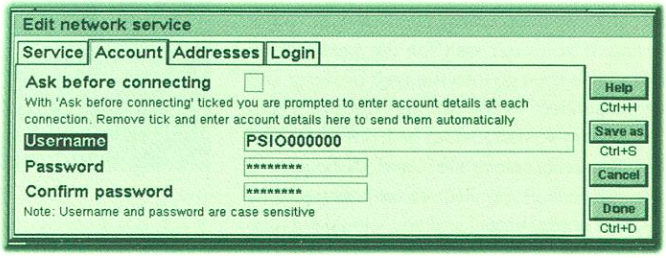
Setting up your modem on a Series 5





Changing your location

Entering your user name and password

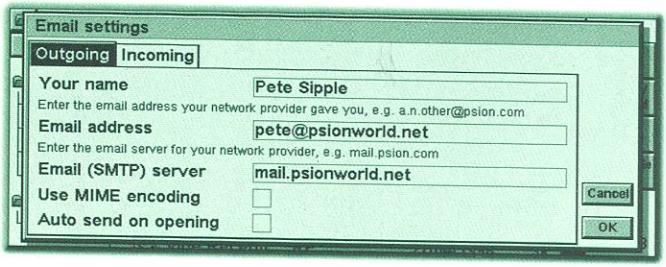


complete: **Service** - see (a) on page 77, **Account** – see (b), **Addresses** - see (g), **Login** – check the 'script' box if your ISP has a template—see notes on login scripts below.

Now you have to set-up your email details. To do this, press the 'Extras' button on the button bar, and select the 'Email' icon. Press [Menu], then Tools | Settings | Email and enter your email set-up information. See (c) to (f). Select 'Ok' and then press [Ctrl]-[E] to exit.

Notes on logon scripts

Each time you dial into the Internet, you have to 'tell' the system your username and password so that it can authenticate you. If you are using an ISP that has a pre-defined template then the work has been done for you. If you don't have a script, then each time you try to connect the system at the other end will request your log-on details and won't give you access until it has successfully identified you. A script does this work for you by automatically feeding the relevant details when electronically 'asked' by the service



Configuring Message Suite's email settings

provider. To avoid the complication of having to write your own log-in script, either use an ISP with a pre-configured script template, or contact Psion or your ISP to see if they can point you in the right direction. Writing your own log-on script is not for the faint-hearted.

Connecting for the first time

You should now have the necessary hardware and the correctly configured software to get online. If you can't wait for the next part of this article then go into the web browser and try to connect to the *Palmtop* website. From the System screen (3a/3c) or from the Extras bar (Series 5), select 'Web' and, in the appropriate space, type *http://www.palmtop.co.uk* — then press [Enter] and you should find our web site. Happy surfing!

In the next issue we'll take a look at using email, some troubleshooting tips, getting the most out of your Internet software, and we'll also tell you where to go on the web.

Just about *the* most useful source of information on setting up a Psion palmtop to go online is Jochen Siegenthaler's Internet web site. It's a veritable one-stop shop for PsiMail Internet and Message Suite users and contains template files for many ISPs not officially supported by Psion.

Jochen also provides very good online technical support if you're still having problems. His web address is *ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ Jochen_Siegenthaler* .

Contact numbers for UK ISPs:

Demon Internet Ltd: 0181-371 1000
Pipex Dial: 0500-474739
CompuServe: 0990 134 819
UK Online: 01749 333 300
CiX: 0181 255 5000
NetDirect: 0181 293 7000

For other countries, see the advertisements in local newsstand computer magazines.

The FOX's Den

The new 'Colorshow' for the Geofox One

by John Woodthorpe

When Psion's Microsoft Powerpoint-like *Presentation Maker* software was developed, they omitted the slideshow view that is used to give video presentations. That was an obvious decision, as there was really no use for it on a palmtop computer. Geofox saw an opportunity there, and the result is that they have worked with Purple Software (the authors of Presentation Maker) to produce *'Colorshow'*.

The hardware part of the package is a Voyager VGA PC (PCMCIA) card from Colorgraphic and a short cable to connect it to a monitor lead or to the lead of a video projector. You also get a slim, Geofox-style manual and two floppy disks containing the Colorshow SIS installation file and a software plug-in for EPOC Connect, Geofox's version of PsiWin. If you don't have access to a Windows NT or Windows 95 machine you can't go any further because both Powerpoint and EPOC Connect (or PsiWin) must be installed on the host machine. Powerpoint is used to convert the files to the Colorshow compressed format, as well as to generate the initial presentations.

Colorshow needs 185KB of disc space, but can take over 2MB of memory to load and display a large (~20 slides) presentation. Remember that everything has to be on the internal drive, as the VGA adaptor will take up the PC card slot. You'll also need the Geofox power supply, otherwise the batteries will die quickly.

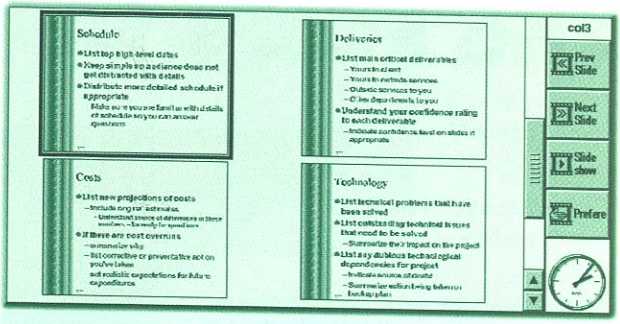
Features

It's important to realise the limitations of the package, as (like the WinCE Pocket Powerpoint) you can't edit a presentation on the palmtop, only display converted Powerpoint ones (at 640x480 or 800x600 resolution and 256 colours). You can customise a presentation by rearranging or deleting slides. The speaker's notes will provide an editable memory aid for the presenter.

Previewing a Presentation

Using Colorshow on a standard monitor is fairly dramatic, but controlling a video projector from the relatively tiny Geofox is quite a surreal experience. I tried it with a 1024x768 model, which Colorshow can drive at a respectable 800x600 resolution, and the output is excellent. I showed it to a few folk

at work, and they were astonished that something so small could produce such good results. The VGA output only works with Colorshow, which means you can look up an address on the Geofox while a slide is being displayed, but you can't project any other applications (although a 'snapshot' add-on should appear on the Geofox web site soon). You can't do any fancy dissolves, but the standard transition between slides is pleasing. You can have an automatic display with a configurable delay and the presentation can repeat indefinitely if desired.



Viewing a presentation

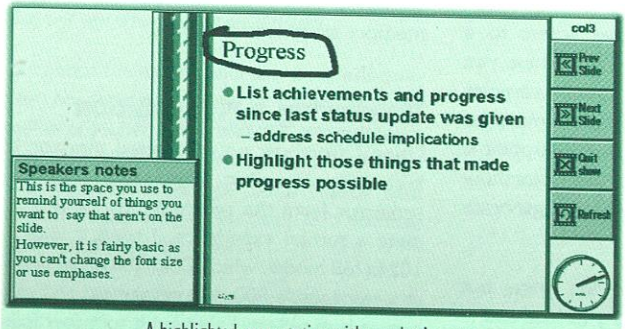
The coloured slide backgrounds look very good on the VGA device but they can make the display difficult to read on the Geofox, so it's worth experimenting a bit to get combinations that work well on both displays. It is easy to move through a presentation with toolbar buttons or with the left and right arrow keys, and you can highlight parts of a slide by 'drawing' on it with the glidepad. Those lines can also be constrained to be straight.

Conclusions

I can see that the business user, whom the Geofox One is mainly aimed at, would appreciate travelling around with a selection of presentations, or getting them by email. I find it harder to accept that they wouldn't want to modify slides while away from a desktop machine. I'd like to see some editing and printing facilities and even the ability to use the VGA output for other applications.

Aside from those reservations it really is a very impressive achievement and makes the Geofox One worth considering simply as a cheap, portable, projection terminal.

Colorshow costs £145 (including VAT) and is available direct from Geofox.


Progress
List achievements and progress since last status update was given
– address schedule implications
Highlight those things that made progress possible
Speakers notes
This is the space you use to remind yourself of things you want to say that aren't on the slide.
However, it is fairly basic as you can't change the font size or use emphases.
col3
Prev Slide
Next Slide
Quit show
Refresh
A highlighted presentation with speaker's notes

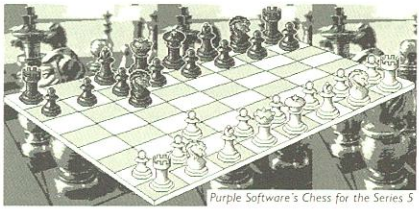
Geofox goes mainstream..

From the next issue we'll be dropping The Fox's Den, but all new Geofox developments will be covered in full detail within the main body of the magazine—so expect even more Geofox coverage in future issues!

Tech-Topics

A look behind the scenes at the anatomy of a computer game

by Leigh Edwards



Purple Software's Chess for the Series 5

Many people enjoy playing computer games. Some, like me, prefer the challenge of *writing* them instead. There are literally hundreds of games available for Psion and Geofox computers, but have you ever wondered what is happening behind the scenes, and what it would take to write one? If so, then read on.

Generally, computer games fall into three categories:

Hand/eye games - 'shoot-em-ups', driving games and other video-style games that pit the processing power of the system against the speed and co-ordination of the human player. These games typically involve highly sophisticated graphics and animation procedures.

Adventure/simulation games - where the player assumes the identity of a character in a story-like scenario and is faced with a series of puzzles, obstacles and/or levels to negotiate, as in the 'Dungeons and Dragons' style of adventure games. These games may represent the current situation purely textually, or with a combination of graphics and text. Simulation games present a situation, environment or organisation to be managed, where your decisions will be the major influence on the development of the game and its final outcome.

Strategy games - card games or those played on a board or grid. They are strategic because of the potential superiority of one position over another, calculated according to the rules of the game. In this category there are two fundamental types. The first is where the player has to pit their wits against the deal of the cards, the roll of the dice and the restrictions imposed by the rules of the game. For example, card games such as Patience/Solitaire or dice games, like Poker Dice. The second type are decision-making strategy games where the computer checks and enforces the rules, but also acts as the opponent.

It is the latter category of strategic games that currently represents the most challenging class of game for developers like myself. Implementing an 'intelligent' decision-making process that is able to challenge the best human minds can push the programmer to the limits of current software technology, and may require the use of extraordinary processing resources. In May 1997, Garry Kasparov, the undisputed world champion of chess, was beaten by *Deep Blue 2*. But the

feat required a hugely powerful Chess machine that was specially built and programmed by an entire team from IBM.

Common elements

The game categories described above illustrate the different aspects of computer game playing: positional strategy, sophisticated graphics, or puzzle solving. However when you look 'under the hood', most of the games have more similarities than differences. Every game has to represent its current state as program data, communicate with the user, check that the rules or limits are not exceeded and possibly evaluate the best move or response.

Programmers must consider the user interface design very carefully. Apart from looking good (and selling more) it will allow the user to concentrate on the game rather than just communicating with the program.

Uncommon elements

Any strategy in 'shoot-em-ups' is usually limited to avoiding obstacles and dodging hostile fire while trying to hit as many of the highest scoring targets as possible. In response the game will offer an increasing challenge to the player, usually by steadily increasing the amount of objects in play and the speed at which events happen. In adventure-style games the program will translate your responses to events or puzzles into a better-or-worse position for solving the problem or achieving the overall goal. In games such as Patience/Solitaire the strategy is solely the responsibility of the player—the program merely enforces the rules. However, games such as Chess, Backgammon, Draughts (Checkers), Go or Bridge must, as a minimum, incorporate an evaluation function to assess the current situation and decide on the most suitable response.

Strategic strategies

There are two fundamental ways that a computer can play a game as well as, or better than, humans can. One is to be really smart, the other is to do a huge amount of work very quickly. The evaluation function is the heart of any strategic computer game. It determines and examines all legal moves, weighs each against a set of criteria/rules for good and bad moves and selects from among them. With Chess, there are typically 20-30 possible moves by each player per turn. With backgammon, there are 21 unique rolls and often 4-6 ways to play each one (not counting doubles, which can have 10 or more ways of being played).

Searching evaluations

Writing truly smart evaluation functions is not easy, so programs such as Chess often make up for it by looking many moves ahead. Therefore, the ability to conduct forward searches is crucial to many games of strategy. And there lies the rub.

Suppose the number of possibilities per move that the computer need consider is p, then for a depth of m moves there would be (on average) p^m alternatives for it to consider. If the calculation of each alternative takes time t, then the total time T taken to calculate to a depth of m would be

$$T = t \times p^m$$

For a game like Draughts p is about four, which allows very deep calculations in a reasonable time. Chess is probably around 80, whereas for Go p is something like 200,

thus limiting the move depth to five or so (m=5).

Looking ahead three moves by both players (m=6) and examining all possibilities when there are 25 choices at each play (p=25) requires evaluating approximately 244 million positions ($=25^6$). In a game like Chess one can discard all but the best 5 or 10 plays per person. With Backgammon, there are always 21 different choices of best plays, depending on the roll of the dice. This makes it crucial to have an excellent evaluation function. The very high value of p for Go (around 200), is probably the main reason why Go programs have not reached anywhere near the same level as computer Chess.

Brute force and ignorance

Computers currently play Chess largely using brute force searching methods, because speed (t) is on their side. However, they are often poor at recognising the long term or strategic value of positions. Deep Blue 2 can evaluate 200 million positions per second and may examine fifty billion or more before making a choice. A Chess Grandmaster may examine thirty positions in the tree of possible moves and rarely more than fifty. Reductions in the average number of actual evaluations done are often made by so-called 'tree pruning' techniques, where unpromising branches of the 'tree of alternatives' are discarded.

Missing elements

At the highest levels, humans play Chess by investigating only the most promising move sequences, and then they apply finely honed recognition of game patterns and strategically advantageous positions. So, the element missing from games programs is *understanding*. Deep Blue 2 has no actual understanding or appreciation of the nature or purpose of Chess, and unlike a human player it cannot learn from experience. So current computers offset their lack of understanding using speed of processing combined with the skill and understanding employed by the programmer in writing the evaluation algorithms.

Look-ahead searching is not so valuable in Backgammon because of the random element introduced by the dice, so good judgement plays the major role. When evaluating a potential move it is essential for the program to maximise the advantage to the computer while minimising the opportunity any move may open up for the human opponent. A game designer must carefully determine which elements of a game are crucial to successful play for most of the time, for each definable stage of the game. When writing the engine for EMCC Backgammon I spent a large proportion of the design time identifying the critical and distinct game phases. Once the evaluation algorithms were written and tested, a large amount of effort went into optimising the parameters applicable to each stage of the game.

Some games have such a high strategic emphasis that it is extremely difficult for game designers to compete effectively with the best human exponents. Bridge is a good example; the very best players will define a complete strategy from the outset for any given hand. 'Go' is another game where strategy is all, and progress to date with computer Go has been limited.

Further enhancements to playing skill can be achieved by using standard opening/closing move sequences or use of known strategic approaches. Good human Chess players do this, and the very best will have a huge

arsenal of known game patterns in their head. However, encoding patterns in a computer game will only defeat human opponents who do not recognise the approach the computer is employing.

To summarise, human game players have poor speed (t) compared to computers, but are able to use experience, judgement and understanding to greatly reduce the possible moves (p) and the effective search depth (m), both of the crucial factors in the exponential equation given earlier.

New approaches

Algorithmic approaches to game evaluation functions are limited by the skill of the designer and because the world's best players of any game are usually more interested in playing their chosen game than in programming computers. However, a new approach using computer-based artificial Neural Networks (NNs) has recently been applied, with great success, to games such as Backgammon. Implemented in software, artificial NN's are like filters capable of acting as sophisticated recognition/evaluation functions after being fed large amounts of typical 'training data'.

Often, NNs are applied to simple single-stage judgement problems, such as distinguishing between a number of clearly distinct states. For example, deciding whether a human face is male or female. The problem with games like Backgammon is that the ultimate outcome, win or lose, depends upon a whole sequence of important move decisions that combine to determine the final result.

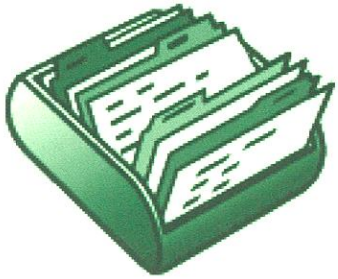
In the past there were two main ways to train a NN-based computer game: to feed the system with real data from games played by humans, or to expose the NN to increasingly superior human opponents to hone its skills to a fine edge. Researchers at IBM have recently applied a novel variant of NNs to Backgammon and by allowing it to play *itself* hundreds of thousands of times has achieved a world-class playing standard.

TD Gammon, as it is called, is currently the World's best game of computer Backgammon, and is currently rated at around -0.05. The score is the number of points won per game, on average, against a top-flight human player. This means that a world-class human opponent has on average scored 0.05 points per game more than the computer program, averaged over several hundred games.

It's true to say that TD Gammon does not begin to understand the game it is playing. Also, it's almost certainly true that TD Gammon's human designers do not understand exactly how it now works. Processing capacity is well ahead of the capability of human software engineers to solve certain types of problem. There seem to be tangible limits to what can be achieved by a purely algorithmic approach. New or hybrid techniques are probably the way forward for the more interesting and challenging computing problems (and games) of the future.

LEIGH EDWARDS is the author of 'Programming Psion Computers' (ISBN 0-9530663 0 4), EMCC Backgammon and Go-Moku, the engine behind Purple Software's Series 5 Backgammon, plus two OPXes for OPL-32 programmers.

Working with DATA



A new series aimed at the relative beginner to the Series 5's built-in programs

by Geoff Preston

Compared with data handling programs on a desktop computer, DATA is not very powerful. But, for a palmtop computer, the application probably has all the features most people need, and some more besides. In the first of a three part series we examine DATA and how it can be used.

What is DATA?

DATA is the exact equivalent of a card index system: the sort of thing you used to get in a library. Many will remember going into a library to find a specific book and being directed to a small cabinet containing numerous drawers about 6" x 4". Inside each drawer were hundreds of postcard-sized cards on which were stored the details of all the books in the library. By today's standards, the system was, to say the very least, cumbersome, with each of possibly a dozen drawers containing up to 12" of solid cardboard to wade through.

Each card contains information about one 'thing': in this case one book. This is called a **record** and each record contains information about the book in headings called **fields**. For convenience, the fields were located in the same place on each card so that you might have the name of the author in the top left, the title underneath and so on.

The cards were ordered, usually alphabetically by the author's surname. If you wanted to find a book by, say, Dickens, you would go to the drawer containing the letter 'D', thumb through the cards until you found the author's name, and then flick though all of the books he wrote until you found the one you're looking for.

The disadvantage with the system was that you could only find a book if you knew the name of the author. If you didn't know the author's name you'd have to read through every card until you found what you were looking for—clearly not a practical proposition. Consequently libraries frequently had a second card index with the same books arranged in order by book title. A duplication of information if ever I saw such a thing. But place the same information into a database on a computer and immediately you'll have a much more versatile resource which will

allow you to find a book with *any* piece of information.

Data on a palmtop

A computer-based database has identical features to the old card index system. Each computer screen is the equivalent of one of the cards and is referred to as a record. Each record looks similar to every other record in so far as they all contain information in the same fields. The advantage of a computerised database is that you can search for any item regardless of the order in which the records were entered. Place the same library book information on a computerised database and you can search for authors, book titles, subject headings, ISBNs, anything.

A database can contain information about any subject you choose. Any subject, that is, where the information can be broken down into fields. For example, a database about cars will use such fields as make, model, engine size, top speed and fuel consumption. A database about planets in our solar system will use fields such as name, distance from the sun and diameter. Usually, the first field will be the main identifier (name of planet, make of car, surname of person, etc.)

The portability of a palmtop computer leads me to believe that whatever subject you choose to enter into DATA, it will be information you're likely to need on the move. Therefore, as an example, we'll create an address book of personal contacts.

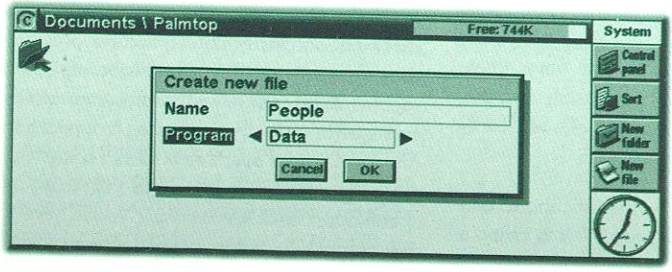
Getting Started

The most important thing to do when creating a new datafile is to switch off the computer and get a pencil and a piece of paper. Alterations, even major ones, can be made at any time, but I feel that you should try to get it right, or very nearly right, first time around.

First you need to decide what information you want to hold (the field names). They can be in any order you choose but it is most likely that you'll want *surname* to be the first field. After that will probably be *forename*, then maybe *email address*, *telephone number*, *business phone*, *home address* and *date of birth*. Write out the field names you wish to use and try to put them into the order you wish them to appear on the screen. It's not a bad idea to write out a couple of records to see what it's going to look like.

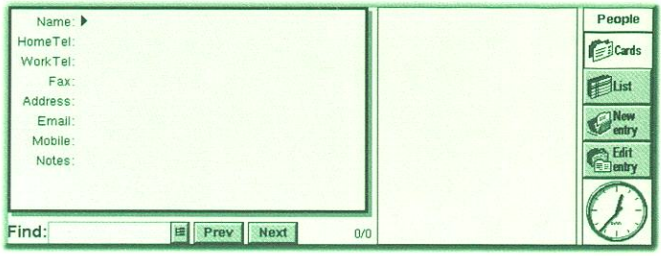
Switch on

All right, you've been itching to start, so switch on the computer and go into the system screen. Touch the 'New file' button on the right hand button bar or press [Ctrl]-[N] to open the 'Create new file' dialog. Enter the name you wish to save it as (in this



Creating the new 'People' file in DATA

The default labels. Convenient if you need them, easy to change if you don't



case 'People') and choose the application type (DATA) in the line below. When you've pressed 'OK' the file will be created and will open at the first record. And guess what—Psion also think that an address book is the most likely application for DATA, and so have thoughtfully provided the bare bones for you.

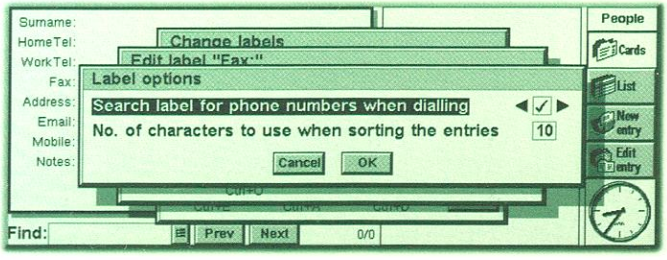
Editing the labels

Eight field names (or **labels** in Psion parlance) are provided but these may be added to, removed or altered. Open the menu bar by either tapping the little arrow icon to the left of the screen or by pressing the [Menu] button. On the right is the 'Tools' menu, and here you'll find 'Change labels...'. Or just press [Ctrl]-[L]. This leads to a dialog in which you can add, remove or edit each label.

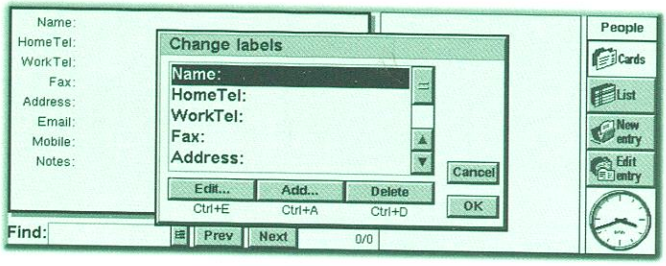
With a field name highlighted, touch the 'Edit' button (or press [Ctrl]-[E]) which will enable you to alter the field name. All field names end with a colon by default, but it is purely visual and you need not follow this layout. However, whatever style you adopt, there should be consistency throughout. In this dialog you may only practically alter the label name. (By pressing 'Options' or [Ctrl]-[O] you can set the number of characters that will be considered when sorting, but it's unlikely that this will need to be altered. Most useful is the option of setting the search label for phone numbers when dialling. If selected, this will be the number that will be dialled if you press [Fn] and [Menu]).

Adding labels

In many cases it is preferable to create new fields rather than altering the default ones. Adding a label rather than altering an existing one is essential if you wish to alter the type of information stored within it. From the 'Tools | Change labels...' dialog you just entered, touch the 'Add...' button and type in the name of the new label. You can now



Label options for dialling and sorting



Changing the labels to suit your own requirements

enter the new label name and select the data type, of which there are six different varieties:

1. **Text** - any combination of letters and numbers up to 250 characters in length. When sorting, any such field will be sorted in alphabetical order.

2. **Number** - this is a whole number (integer) and entries in this field may only contain the digits 0-9, which can also include a minus sign if need be, but no decimals.

3. **Floating point** - otherwise known as a 'real' number, entries of this type can contain any number, optionally with a minus and/or a decimal point.

4. **Date** - this data type requires a day, month and year in the format XX/XX/XXXX. When sorting, dates will be sorted into ascending chronological order.

5. **Yes/No** - this field allows entry of either a tick (or a blank) to indicate a yes (or a no).

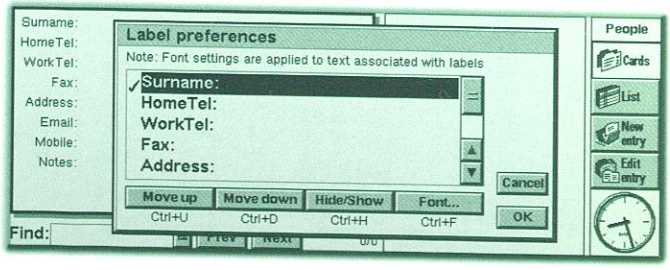
6. **Memo** - you may have a maximum of 16 Memo fields, and each will enable you to include text of (theoretically) unlimited length.

Delete labels

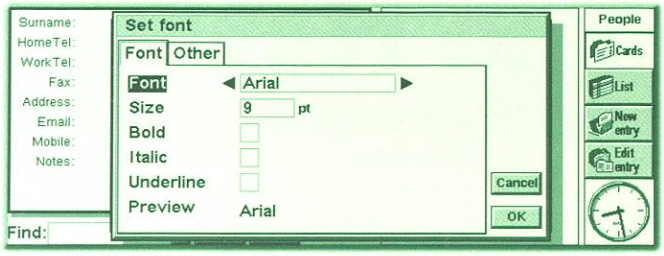
Any labels you don't want can be removed by highlighting them and touching the 'Delete' button. When you've got the list of labels as you want them, press the 'OK' button in the 'Change labels' dialog.

Adding effects to the labels

For further label effects, open the menu bar and go to 'Tools' and 'Label preferences...' ([Shift]-[Ctrl]-[K]). This dialog should be used after you've created your list of labels. Once here, you can place the labels in the order



Setting all the preferences for your custom labels



Changing the label font

you require by highlighting them as needed. To highlight several labels at once, hold down the [Ctrl] key while selecting.

The other option in this dialog is to alter the font, font size and colour (shade of grey), though this does not actually change the label, only the text placed alongside it. Highlight the label you wish to alter and either touch the 'Font...' button or press [Ctrl]-[F]. This opens the dialog in which you may choose not only the font style and size, but also emphases such as bold, italic or underline. Touching the 'Other' tab allows you to change the text colour, strikethrough (crossed out) and print position (superscript – above the line, subscript – below the line). At the bottom of these dialogs is a preview to show you exactly what the text will look like. When you've applied all the effects you require, tap the 'OK' button to set them.

These effects can be useful if applied carefully. It is most likely to be the identifier field that you'll want emboldened or increased in size to make it stand out from the others.

Other options available

By choosing 'View preferences' from the 'Tools' menu, you can choose to either show or hide the card browser (the list of records normally seen on the right) and to alter the size of the browser. You can also choose to hide the labels and only display the data typed into each field.

For security, it is also possible to hide a label and the text typed alongside it on every record. To do this, go to 'Label preferences...' on the 'Tools' menu, select the label you want to be hidden and touch the 'Hide/Show' button, or press [Ctrl]-[H].

In the next instalment we'll look at entering data, searching and sorting.

Other label effects to get everything looking exactly how you want it

"On The Net"

The latest gossip from Psion's online community

Our ever-vigilant Pete Sipple trawls the Internet once again to see what's new with online Psion users. In this issue we look at imaginary Psion takeovers, insistent machines and costly claims...

Stop, thief!

Theft, loss or damage of our Psions is always a concern, and it's worth considering how much it will cost to replace a machine should the worst happen...

"Does anyone have any suggestions for insuring my S5 against accidental damage, loss, theft, etc? I am looking for cover in the UK." (saxomal@bluecats.demon.co.uk)

"I've just (yesterday) included my S5 on my household insurance. It didn't add much to the premium (I've already got two PCs on it!) It's only covered against theft, though. I reckon accidental damage cover would be very expensive." (mbarnes@samaritan.org)

"Ask your household insurer about 'all risks' cover. It should only cost about £5 extra per year and will cover you if you drop it, as well as loss/theft. You will probably be liable for the first £50 of damage, but that is a small price to pay against buying a brand new one." (luddite@enterprise.net)

"Well, I've been down this route and no joy I'm afraid. The problem seems to be that I will be using the machine for business use as well as personal." (saxomal@bluecats.demon.co.uk)

"You will probably find that items under £1000 do not have to be insured separately and will be covered by your contents insurance. Obviously this will depend on your policy, if it's unclear in the documentation contact your insurance company and ask." (patb@mround.bt.co.uk)

Alarming news?

The gauntlet has been thrown down. Can some shareware author come up with a way of controlling a Psion's nagging alarm and being kinder to the environment?

"I don't keep my Psion with me 24 hours a day, so it's not surprising that occasionally an alarm goes off without me being there to cancel it. It seems that the Psion will keep on beeping, ringing or whatever until the alarm is cancelled. Naturally this frustrates non-Psion users near the machine, since they don't know how to turn it off. It drains the batteries too. I know that alarms can be turned off completely for a given duration, but what I want to know is whether it is possible to have an alarm that only rings once and doesn't go into snooze mode?" (vjosullivan@my-dejanews.com)

"As far as I know, no. The solution is to keep it with you or set the sound off." (ezrjrf@cbobk.pbz)

"The simplest solution I can think of is to leave the Psion open. When the alarm goes off and you're not there, it will annoy others. Eventually some inquisitive soul will be annoyed enough to take a peek and, on seeing the 3

buttons on the screen, press 'Esc' to cancel the alarm. Just a quick thought, if you set the sound to 'church bell', you might be able to divert the blame to the local church!" (john@photopia.demon.co.uk)

"I am a former PalmPilot user, and one of the few things I hate most about my Series 5 is the incessant alarm. Even when I'm carrying my Psion with me, it is annoying to have it continue to sound the alarm until I acknowledge it. My stock PalmPilot sounded the alarm only once, and then left the visible notification on the screen so I could still read the alarm message the next time I turned it on. Some ingenious shareware author then created a program (Alarmhack) which allowed the user to specify how many times to sound the alarm in a row, an automatic snooze interval (without user acknowledgement), and a number of total times to sound the alarm before 'giving up'. This is what I need for my Psion!" (glenglis@mail.delcoelect.com)

A touchy subject

To tap, or not to tap—that is the question. Could Psion do without the keyboard altogether?

"Correct me if I am wrong, as I have not owned a Series 5, but I have tried the Series 5 quite a number of times now, and I realise that Psion 5 is not pen-oriented enough. This is one reason that holds me back from buying one. For example, to create a new appointment, things like changing the appointment time cannot be adjusted by using the stylus (i.e. you must use the keyboard to punch in the time). Also, for contact lists, if you have a long list of contacts (i.e. phone numbers), and you need to find a person, you have to either use the keyboard to punch in who you want to find, or you have to use your stylus to move the scroll bar. Other organisers usually have indexed tags so that you can use your stylus to quickly tap on it and find what you want. I want to just use the stylus alone and not a mix with the keyboard." (kwcwan@hotmail.com)

"I find myself using the Psion in all-stylus mode (while standing in line, for example) or in all-keyboard mode (when I have a surface to set it on). Ideally, these should both be possible without having to mix stylus and keyboard (which is cumbersome). If someone knows where (if?) the share/freeware program can be found, I would be very interested in looking at it". (bjn@visi.com)

"It's refreshing to read an alternative to the view which is more often promoted by some users here, that 'the touch-screen is pointless and makes the screen hard to read', so can we have a version without it please?" (anj@ast.cam.ac.uk)

Six, lies and videoscreens...

Every now and then, an online user throws in a contentious comment just to antagonise the rest of the 'community'. A typical example happened in mid-July, when one poster reported that Psion had allegedly been bought out by US company, 3Com. As well as being potentially libellous, the comments were totally unfounded and printed under a false address. Normally, I would decline to make reference to such a message, were it not for two amusing replies...

"...You get to read some absolute piffle on this newsgroup, but that really does take the cake." (gwr@univex.com)

"I know the rumour is not true 'cause I just bought Psion myself this morning. I'm announcing availability of the ROM version 1.1 for the Series 5 starting on Monday. And a brand new model, the Series 6, with a colour screen, many software improvements, instant and perfect synchronisation with Windows 98, smaller than the Series 5 and weighing 4 ounces, a full size laptop styled keyboard deployable at the push of a button, 65 hours of battery life on one AAA, perfect hinges, and, most important, no rubberised finish. The new Series 6 will start shipping on Tuesday. Street price approximately $48 in the US and £750 in the UK." (bgurfinkel@aol.com)

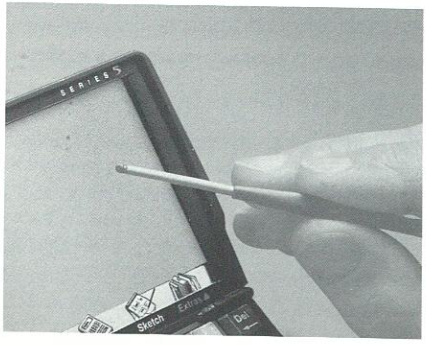
Hints & Tips

Every item published in this section wins a FREE Palmtop tee shirt!

Worried about scratches?

When I upgraded to the Series 5, my initial concern was about scratching the touch-sensitive screen. While on the train with my new gadget on the way home one day, I had the idea to trim an OHP (overhead projector) acetate film to fit and protect my screen.

To do this you need a very sharp scalpel or other blade, then measure the width of the screen (which should be 146mm), then the height (which should be 61mm—about 2mm larger than the actual screen) which will enable the acetate to be self-securing by inserting the bottom edge behind the icon bar then gently sliding the top edge between the Psion's screen and its surround. Due to the natural effect of static electricity the acetate should then lay flat onto the screen. Be careful not to get any fingerprints or bed fluff between the acetate and screen.



Since trying this out I've noticed that the OHP acetates create additional glare and reflection, and scratch too easily, so instead I've switched to using the plastic sleeves used to hold papers in ring binders (available from larger stationery shops), which have a slight pigmentation which helps to reduces glare and reflection, and form a perfect simulation of the feel of paper when using the stylus.

Tim Bryan
Forest Hill, London

Moving AGENDA memos

When working in Series 3a/3c AGENDA I occasionally need to copy information held in one memo over to another. Normally this is not possible as any copied data is lost when exiting the first memo. I overcome this by temporarily 'Bring'ing the text into a WORD

Time Tracker revisited...

Referring to the 'Time tracker' tip in issue 18, Series 5 DATA won't in fact adjust the content of a date field automatically when an entry is edited.

The concept of using a date field to track changes to each entry is still a valid one, though, and can be easily done with a few keypresses. Just move to the date label, press [Tab] (to bring up the calendar) and then the spacebar. The highlight will automatically move to 'today' and pressing [Enter] will write this date into the field.

Take advantage of the handy 'File association' feature in the 3c's FILES application

file, then bringing it back into the new AGENDA memo and finally deleting the WORD file. This sounds quite protracted, but is worthwhile for lengthy blocks of text.

Nigel Charles
Devizes, Wiltshire

Associate!

The FILES application on the Series 3c is a worthwhile improvement on the rather basic file selector built into the 3a. (3a users can get all the added functionality of FILES from RWSoft's shareware *X3Tree*).

One under-used feature of FILES is the ability to 'associate' different files types with application programs running on the machine.

Once set up you only need to move the cursor to an 'associated' file and press [ENTER]. It will then be automatically opened from the chosen application. Particularly useful examples are associating PIC and other graphics files to be opened by whatever drawing program you have on your machine, or allowing WORD to automatically open additional types of text file.

To make your own associations simply go into FILES and highlight a file of the type you want to associate (i.e. one with the right three letter extension). Then choose 'File associations' from the 'Special' menu. In the resulting dialog box press the [Tab] key from the 'Open with: Name' line to browse and find the main application file for the program you want to automatically open that file type.

George Fleischmann Jr.
Va'rosha'z, HUNGARY

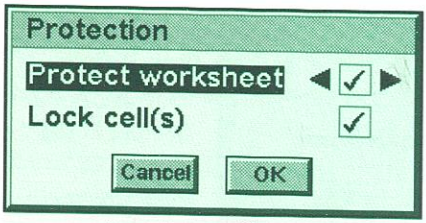
Avoiding accidents in SHEET

It's all too easy to accidentally overwrite precious data in a SHEET cell. A slip of the finger on an arrow key and you can be entering text or numbers that will overwrite the current cell contents. Psion have provided some very good 'Protection' functions which can be applied to individual cells—make sure you use them. As each set of cells (perhaps a month's worth of figures, etc.) is completed, protect them before you go any further!

See also our 'Working with SHEET' tutorials, especially in issue 17 - Ed.

Important SHEETs are also worth protecting in their entirety. If, like me, you keep separate SHEET files for each calendar or financial year, make sure you set them to 'Read-only' once completed. You'll still be able to view them, but without the risk of accidentally changing the numbers.

A final tip which might one day save you grief. When deleting or inserting rows (or columns) in SHEET, remember to highlight the *entire* row (or column) before doing so. If you don't



Protect those spreadsheet cells!

do this you'll end up with formulae which point to the wrong cells and a generally broken SHEET. A quick way to highlight a row on the 3a/3c is to use [Control]-[Space], or [Control]-[Tab] for a column. The Series 5 makes things easier as you can just tap on the row or column header letter/number with the stylus.

David Balding
Weymouth

EPOCs and SIBOs...

Not a tip, but a useful piece of Psion trivia that all our readers should be aware of, is that Psion recently changed the name of their system software. From now on, EPOC/32 (the operating system the Series 5 is based on) will be known just as 'EPOC' and EPOC/16 (as used in the Series 3a/3c) will be 'SIBO'. We've used these new conventions throughout this issue, to be consistent with this naming policy.

Trivia fans may like to note that SIBO stands for '**SI**ngle **B**oard **O**rganiser' and that (depending on who you talk to) EPOC either stands for '**E**lectronic **P**iece **O**f **C**heese' or (more probably) was simply made up as an impressive-sounding name by Psion's founders (i.e. 'Epoch' without the final 'h').

Q&A

Is a PC really necessary?

Q I currently own a Series 3c, and have been put off upgrading to a Series 5 by its apparent reliance on a PC for the installation of software from either floppy disk or CD-ROM. Are there any plans to make Series 5 software available on CompactFlash, and if not, is anyone planning to manufacture a floppy disk drive (similar to Purple Software's Cyclone for the Series 3) or combined floppy and CD drive for the Series 5?

Ian Astle
Kimberley, Nottinghamshire

A **The distribution of software on standard CompactFlash is not economically feasible, so floppy disk and CD-ROM are the only realistic alternatives. Considering that PCs are slowly becoming more prevalent it's unlikely that an external disk drive for the Series 5 would sell in sufficient numbers to make it worthwhile for any hardware manufacturer to consider.**

The best advice we can offer is that most people at least know *someone* with access to a PC, and considering that the necessary cable and connection software (PsiWin) is included in the purchase price of every Series 5, it's likely that 90% of Psion users can find a PC-owning friend who is willing to load up the software and help perform software installations.

If you know someone with a PC (PCMCIA) card drive in their computer

(not yet common in desktop PCs, but almost universal in modern laptop computers) then software can be copied without recourse to PsiWin or cables.

To do this you must purchase a CF to PC card adaptor (available for around £10) and plug your CF disk into it, then plug the adaptor into the drive on the PC. Installation files and programs can then be moved freely between PC and CF disks with no need to load PsiWin onto someone else's PC.

A CompactFlash to PC card adaptor—handy for laptops

Questions?

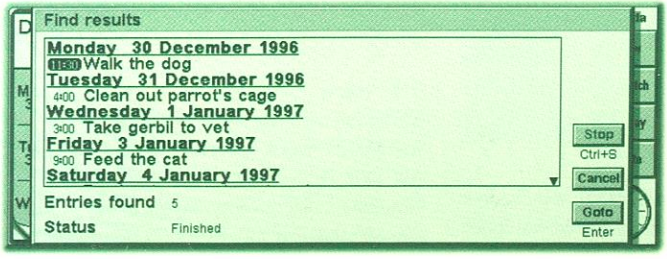
Please send in YOUR technical questions. All published questions will earn the author a FREE *Palmtop* tee shirt!

The missing 'List' view

Q The Series 3a/3c AGENDA's 'List' view is a convenient way to peruse all entries in chronological order. This feature is inexplicably missing from the Series5, but is there any way around this omission?

Nigel Charles
Devizes, Wiltshire

A **Yes, at least in a limited fashion. Just press [Ctrl]-[f] to bring up the 'Find' dialog, then without entering anything in the 'Text to be found' box, press [Enter]. This will find all entries in the entire AGENDA, listed in chronological order. If you only want to view entries for a specific date range then enter the start and end dates in the 'From' and 'To' boxes first. You can then tap on an entry and press [Enter] to see that entry in the last view you were using. The limitations are that you can't edit entries while in the 'Find' view and that you can't print from this view.**



Getting around the Series 5 AGENDA's lack of a 'real' list view...

Murgan's Musings

Stephen Murgan looks at life without his Psion, and how the Series 3 Emulator came to the rescue...

<CRACK!>

The sound of one's faithful silicon friend having a close encounter with the floor is not a pleasant one. Picking it up confirmed the worst—a busted hinge. One phone call to Psion and I have the information that I need to return the wee beastie for repair. For the next three weeks or so I will be Psion-less. What to do, what to do?

Fortunately as a seasoned Psion campaigner I had prepared for this exact eventuality. I took the machine home and backed up all files that had changed that day (it still amazes me when I think of the pounding that a Psion can take and still work), then I made arrangements to return it for repairs.

Living without a Psion is not easy. While the 3a was being repaired I went through a couple of rough weeks. Weeks when I felt unprepared, disorganised, and downright underdressed (is that a 3a in your pocket or are you just pleased to see me?)

I found myself resorting to older and clunkier ways of doing things: using an old-fashioned alarm clock to wake me up instead of the weird noises that used to emanate from my pocket-sized pal, keeping pen and paper nearby just in case inspiration strikes. Having to cross things out instead of deleting them. And having to remember *everything*.

Living without her...

They say that you don't know what you've got until it's gone, and the convenience of having the machine nearby or in a pocket is one of those indescribable things that can only be experienced. Those who have never had a PIM or a palmtop computer (or have one but have never used it properly) may think of it as somewhat geeky, but I think I can safely say that I am preaching to the converted here in *Palmtop*. Perhaps I rely on it too much, but as far as I can tell that's what it's for!

The worst thing was having to carry stuff around in my head that I normally delegate to my (much more reliable) silicon memory. It felt like my head was spinning most of the time. At least twenty times a day I found myself reaching for my Psion before experi-

encing a feeling of emptiness when I realised that it wasn't there.

Don't procrastinate, EMULATE!

As well as the Series 5 Emulator discussed on page 63, Psion also have a 3a Emulator that runs under DOS on PCs. I have used this program before. It is a little clunky, is unsupported by Psion and is somewhat cantankerous (it does not tolerate graphical shells well, and likes to 'own' the machine), but is the only way I know of being able to interact with backed-up data without having to change it into some other format first—and it is ideal for temporary absences of the Psion machine such as this.

The Emulator can be downloaded directly from Psion's web site: *www.psion.com/downloads/pc/s3aemul* or from their FTP site *ftp.psion.com/pub/psiond4/downloads/pc/s3aemul*. It is a zip file 882K in size. Siena and workabout Emulators can also be found nearby, though 3c users must make do with the 3a version.

First I copied the most vital Psion documents from my most recent backups (a 'survival package', consisting of a selected few spreadsheets, word processor documents, AGENDAs and database files) into a directory on my hard disk. Then I created a boot disk that would boot the Psion Emulator software. Resetting the machine with this disk in the drive booted straight into the Emulator, and the 'survival package' files were right there in plain view on the system screen.

Now many of you also have a PC at work, and installing the Emulator on your work machine (with your employer's permission, if necessary) is a simple enough task. But how to keep the data in sync? Well, if you use Windows 95, this is a perfect job for the 'Briefcase'. When I arrive at work I use it to merge in any files that I changed at home during the previous evening. The process takes only a few minutes, and is done by the time I have helped myself to my first coffee of the day. At the end of each day I roll in any changes back into the 'briefcase' and take the disk home to update the files there.

It is a testament to the programmers who designed the Psion's operating system that the data can be packed into such a small space—I was able to pack my entire 'survival package' (several documents and spreadsheets, four AGENDA files and three databases) into a briefcase on a single 1.44MB floppy disk with plenty of room to spare. With Emulators running at home and at work, I can keep the latest data with me at all times. I just need a PC to be able to access it. It is a pain, but at least it works.

A week later...

It's back! Restoring the data and setting up the machine the way I like it took me about an hour. It's amazing, the change in me. Suddenly I am more confident, more organised, more aware—generally on top of the situation. Just because I have a Psion in my pocket. Once in a while I take it out just to run my fingers over it. My lady views this with a mixture of amusement and "I've seen this all before" weariness.

EMULATION...

An Emulator is now also available for the Series 5. See the article on page 63 for full details.

The Psion Reference

UseNet Groups

comp.sys.psion.announce
comp.sys.psion.misc
comp.sys.psion.comm
comp.sys.psion.apps
comp.sys.psion.programmer
comp.sys.psion.marketplace
comp.sys.psion.reviews

CompuServe Psion discussion	GO PSION
CiX Psion conference	join psion
AOL - Psion Noticeboard	Psion/General noticeboard - Keyword: Psion
Series 5 mailing list	Fill in form on *www.pinkworks.com/pda/s5list.html*

Psion-related software

New World Technology Site	www.nwt.com/shareware
Usenet Binary Group	comp.binaries.psion
CompuServe	GO PSION
CiX	'join psion', then look in '/files' and '/s5_files' file lists
PsionKing	*www.psionking.com*

Psion FAQ

The Frequently Asked Questions document contains useful information, facts, names, addresses and numbers:

Series 3 version:	*www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/faq.htm*
Series 5 version:	*www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/s5part1.htm*

World Wide Web sites

Psion PLC	*www.psion.com*
Psion Software	*www.software.psion.com*
Palmtop magazine	*www.palmtop.co.uk*
3-Lib shareware	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk* or *3lib.mobile.be*
5 Alive!	*5alive.psionking.com*
Palmtop BV	*www.palmtop.nl*
Palmscape	*www.palmscape.com*
Purple Software	*www.purplesoft.com*
RMR Software	*www.rmrsoft.com*

The Software Author Directory

As part of *Palmtop*'s commitment to bring you as much useful information as possible, we're going to ring the changes in this spot in the magazine. Issue 21 will see the next official *Palmtop Software Reference* and in the meantime we've got several tables and guides for you. First it's the turn of the definitive guide to Psion authors on the Internet—this should be the first place you turn to when trying to track down a program by a particular author.

Author	Contact address
Paul Adams	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Sector/7981/index.html
Rolf Aeschbacher	http://bounce.to/geodis
Marco Aicardi	http://www.volftp.vol.it/IT/IT/ITALIANI/AICARDI/
AlfaVision	http://www.alfavision.com/psion.html
Gareth Alldread	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Lakes/4917/
Rick Andrews	http://choc-island.ukonline.co.uk
Thomas Ashton	http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~ashton01/
Mark Avey	http://freespace.virgin.net/mark.avey/
Gary Bainbridge	http://www.compulink.co.uk/~bainb/
Keith Baker	http://diana.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~krb/cv.html
Stephen Baker	http://www.orchid1.demon.co.uk/
Nigel Bamber	http://www.highfell.demon.co.uk/psion.htm
Dean Barnard	http://www.dhjb.demon.co.uk/psion.htm
Lee Barton	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/9372/psion.html
Neil Bee	http://home.clara.net/nkb/psion/
Patrick Bell	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Patrick_Bell
Tim Bentinck	http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/parade/nc51/
Jurgen Bermann	http://www.inetw.com/home/bermannj/
Simon Berridge	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/SimonBerridge
Jim Berrington	http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/berrington
Mark Birch	http://www.soft.net.uk/supersonic/psion/
Marcel Bokhorst	http://huizen.dds.nl/~chronos/psion.htm
Tristan Bonsall	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tristanbonsall
John Bool	http://www.u-net.com/~woolly/
Ad Bosch	http://www.adbosch.demon.nl/
Fred Botton	http://www.chez.com/fredbotton/
Frederic Bouvry	http://users.skynet.be/sky43948/
Paul Bowlay	http://members.tripod.com/~bowlay/
John Boyce	http://www.compulink.co.uk/~jbsoft/
BrainDrain	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Heights/5596/
Graham Brand	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/graham_brand/
Brendan Breede	http://www.informatik.uni-bremen.de/~brendan/
David Brown	http://ds.dial.pipex.com/david.brown/
Jamie Brown (PJP)	http://www.chez.com/pjpm/

Author	Contact address
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Hamish Buchanan	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Heights/8956
Grégory Buscail	http://www.mygale.org/08/gbuscail/psion/
P J Buxton	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/xray_haslar/psion.htm
Didier Cabuzel	http://www.cabuzel.com/psion/
Brian Cadge	http://www.kerswell.demon.co.uk
Pedro van Can	http://www.xs4all.nl/~psion/procyon.htm
John Caradimas	http://www.hol.gr/people/sv1cec/psion.htm
Hedwig Carlier	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/hcarlier/
Dave Catlin	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/dave_catlin
Micro Cheng	http://www.hkstar.com/~micro/english/download.html
Gareth Clarke	http://www.boff1.demon.co.uk/resourcesoft.html
Andy Clarkson	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/andyc
Alan Clifford	http://www2.prestel.co.uk/coprolite/
Dominic Clifton	http://homepages.force9.net/dsltd
Mike Coon	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mjcoon/
Reil Couperus	http://www.iaehv.nl/users/reinc/
Roger Creagh-Osborne	http://www.crosborne.demon.co.uk/psion.htm
Graham Crichton	http://www.d-n-a.net/users/dnetRFLA/
Tony Crocker	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tsteven_C
Andras Cserhati	http://melanie.tolna.net/~cserhati/psion/psionlap.htm
Peter Csutora	http://members.tripod.com/~csutora/
Berthold Daum	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/lichtbild/theleft.htm
John Davies	http://www.davies.lu/Psion/
Adam Dawes	http://www.electrolyte.demon.co.uk
Nick Dawkins	http://www.pavilion.co.uk/users/ndawkins
Marc de Oliveira	http://www.deOliveira.dk/pythia
Kees de Vries	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/platodva/
Lieuwe de Vries	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/platodva/psion.htm
Stephen Denham	http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/wizworldservices/navigate.htm
Steuart Dewar	http://www.gorilla-haven.org/pimlico
Achay Doan	http://members.aol.com/achay/
Daniel Dubocq	http://www.nauta.es/clientes/psion/
Jon Duff	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jon_duff
Andrew Duffield	http://www.duffy.force9.co.uk/
Guillaume Dupont	http://www.imaginet.fr/~bdupont
Martin Dunstan	http://www-theory.dcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/~mnd/
Leigh Edwards	http://www.compulink.co.uk/~emcc/
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Mark Esposito	http://www.pelicansoft.com
Dave Evans	http://www.devans.demon.co.uk/
Gary Ewer	http://homepages.which.net/~peter.ewer
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Stephen Gallagher	http://www.mailhost.net/~sgallagher/
Juergen Galupki	http://www.germany.net/teilnehmer/100/1894/psion.htm
Mian Gardner	http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/mian
GB Software	http://www.ziplink.net/~gbsoft/
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Kevin Groves	http://www.cix.co.uk/~kgroves
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Dave Gymer	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Way/4798/
Robert Hale	http://www.on-track.demon.co.uk/kjv_p3.htm
Christopher Hartley	http://www.maison.demon.co.uk
David Henshaw	http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~dhenshaw/
Eric Hirsch	http://www.chez.com/ehirsch/index.html
Henry Hirst	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ahirst/
Richard Hodges	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Horizon/8795/index.htm
Andre Hofmeyr	http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Castle/1017
Keith Hollis	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/fawnbench/
Alan Hughes	http://www.users.epulse.net/~gerpsych/amh.htm
Frederick Jensen	http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/8558/
Henning Jensen	http://www.geocities.com/RodeoDrive/2765/
Mike Jipping	http://www.kabestin.com/
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Peter Johnson	http://www.leven-crow.demon.co.uk/
Derek Johnston	http://homepages.enterprise.net/decca/
David Joyce	http://www.compulink.co.uk/~djoyce/
Matthew Joyce	http://www.xilonen.co.uk/
Jeroen Kamphoff	http://home.wxs.nl/~jeroen.kamphoff/psion.html
Chris Kessell	http://www.blitter.demon.co.uk/
Simon Kewin	http://www.snkewin.demon.co.uk/
Jason Kneen	http://www.kneen.demon.co.uk/
Maarten Kroes	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/MKroes/
David Kurtz	http://www.kurzbyrn.demon.co.uk/
Daniel Landes	http://www.landes.demon.co.uk/psion/
Aron Landy	http://www.aron.mcmail.com/luach/luach.htm
Bohdan Lechnowsky	http://www.nfinity.com/~amicom/psion/pengo/
Michael Leigh (Interdata)	http://www.compulink.co.uk/~lacegem/
Jean-Baptiste Lernout	http://altern.org/jbler/

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Robert Longbottom	http://members.tripod.com/~RobertCL/psion.htm
Andrew Lord	http://members.tripod.com/~alord
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Michael Maehrlein	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/maehrlein/PsiBio/PsiBio.html
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Nick Matthews	http://www.kizzyco.com/
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Shane McKee	http://www.infosites.net/dnet/dnethWMo/psion1.htm
J Medhurst	http://home.clara.net/tixy/psion/index.html
Trevor Mendham	http://www.demon.co.uk/atu-xviii/professional/
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Roger Millard	http://www.cix.co.uk/~mpsystems/golfcard/
Kevin Millican	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/KMILLICAN/
Fabio Mosetti	http://members.tripod.com/~fmsoft/index.htm
Roger Muggleton	http://www.cix.co.uk/~hzk/
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Nick Murray	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/1439/shell.html
Pete Muys	http://www.xs4all.be/~petemuys/
NavTech	http://www.avnet.co.uk/navtech/
John Neale	http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/5726/psion.html
Thomas Nemec	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tnemec/Default.htm
Pascal Nicholas	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/1215/
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Gary Perlmutter	http://www.ndirect.co.uk/~gperl/
Jonathan Perry	http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/perry
Holger Pfaff	http://www.class.de/~holger/psider.html
Daniel Pfund	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/
Ian Pinkard	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/pinkard/computer.htm
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Darren Prescott	http://www.medvale.demon.co.uk/

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Tim Richardson	http://www.btinternet.com/~tim.richardson/
Alan Richey	http://www.rmrsoft.com/
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Marcel Schoen	http://www.village.ch/~schoen/
Mayur Shah	http://www.btinternet.com/~devrag.software/
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Jamie Shotton	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Bay/6740/
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Pete Sipple	http://members.aol.com/petesipple/
Adam Sissman	http://www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/peaks/6643/
Daniel Sissman	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/DanielsPsionSoftware/Apps.htm
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Mike Smith	http://www.boink.demon.co.uk/psion/
Willem Smouter	http://utopia.knoware.nl/users/wsmout/psion.html
Tim Soos	http://www.oneimage.com/~tims/Psion/
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Russ Spooner	http://www.labrat.demon.co.uk
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Markus Stark	http://members.aol.com/stark3333/
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Paul Synnott	http://members.aol.com/psynn83165/
Nick Tan	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Hills/4728/
Tat Tang	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Tat_Tang
Nigel Taylor	http://www.redgunna.demon.co.uk/
Simon Taylor	http://www.modems.demon.co.uk/
Richard Teel	http://www.erols.com/richteel/
Stuart Tetley	http://www.flagsys.com/scorecard/
Ben Thornton	http://www.wuli.demon.co.uk/wulisoft.htm
Nick Tyrrell	http://www.cix.co.uk/~narnia/bsge/psion.htm
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Richard Wakelin	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/RWakelin/
Steve Walker	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/protronics/page9.html
Mark Warner	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Peaks/5687/
James Watson	http://www.dudleysoft.com/psion.html
Simon Webb	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/swebb
Ian Webster	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/I_Webster
Arnaud Weil	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/7834/
Roman Werner	http://www2.active.ch/~rwerner
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Phil Whiles	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Lakes/3216
Gary Whitby	http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/gary-whitby/
John Whiting	http://www.lexden.demon.co.uk
Alex Wilbur	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/awilbur
David Wild	http://www.calm.hw.ac.uk/david
Gareth Wild	http://www.st-and.ac.uk/~www_sa/personal/gw4/
Patrick Wildenborg	http://www.IAEhv.nl/users/wildborg/dart3a.htm
Simon Williams	http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/Spa/4350/psion.html
Les Wilson	http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~lwilson/index.html
Michael Wilton	http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Network/4601/
Lord John Wodehouse	http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/lordjohn/
Tom Wright	http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~kfocus/
Wally Wright	http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/WalterWright

The above are mostly individual authors. You might also want to check out some of the software houses:

Purple Software	http://www.purplesoft.com/
Palmtop BV	http://www.palmtop.nl/
RMR Software	http://www.rmrsoft.com/
Palmscape	http://www.palmscape.com/

The Siena Directory

An occasional feature just for Siena owners. Authors and programs can either be tracked down using the author reference in this issue or by using the download links on the 3-Lib web site.

Program name	Description	Author	Type
3TS	Small file manager	Roger Muggleton	Freeware
AstroAid	Astrology utility	Marcel Bokhorst	Shareware
Backgammon/Chinese Chess	Strategy games	Purple Software	Commercial
BankPlus	BankPlus account manager	Pete Sipple	Shareware
Big Sheep	Assorted utilities	Graham Parks	Freeware
Chess	Chess game	Purple Software	Commercial
Chess	Chess game	Johan Van Barel	Shareware
Colleague	Employee extension database	Ad Bosch	Freeware
Dungeon	Dungeons adventure game	Thomas Ashton	Freeware
FigureIt	Financial calculator	GB Software	Freeware
Fit4Life	Heart rate analysis, etc.	Steve Litchfield	Freeware
Future Trader	Futures simulation game	Tim Kiel	Freeware
GolfCard	Match logger/analysis	Roger Millard	Shareware
Hearts	Card solitaire	Nick Dawkins	Shareware
IR drivers	Extra printer drivers	Psion	Freeware
JWIN	Conversions/fuel/date, etc.	Phil Spencer	Shareware
LifeGuide	Bible-based guide for life!	Steve Litchfield	Freeware
Mapper-Si/GB	UK mapping system	Steve Litchfield	Shareware
Master	Mastermind game	Lieuwe de Vries	Freeware
MonthVu	Month view for AGENDA	C E Steuart Dewar	Shareware
Oasis	Tribute to Oasis (the band)	Thomas McGaw	Freeware
PacLamb	Pacman clone	Graham Parks	Freeware
PasAgn	AGENDA password system	Phil Spencer	Shareware
Patsiena	Patience game	Mark Wheadon	Shareware
PCollect	Record collector's utility	Matt Thomas	Shareware
Pscore	Cricket scoreboard	Brian Fowler	Shareware
PsiTact	PsiTact contact manager	Tony Crocker	Shareware
Q-Bank	Single-account bank manager	JKN	Shareware
Quick Alarm	quick settings, etc.	Brendan Breede	Freeware
Quick-Note	'Jotter' type utility	C E Steuart Dewar	Shareware
Relate	Contact/client manager	Ad Bosch	Freeware
Sheep Tetris	Tetris game	Graham Parks	Freeware
Shove	Tile-swapping puzzle	Kees de Vries	Freeware
Siena Bank	Home accounts suite	Alan Richey	Shareware
Siena Collect	Collection manager	Alan Richey	Shareware
Siena Draw	Drawing/painting	Alan Richey	Shareware
Siena Dungeon	Dungeon adventure game	Nick Dawkins	Shareware
Siena Expenses Manager	Expense manager	Alan Richey	Shareware

Program name	Description	Author	Type
Siena File	Comprehensive file manager	Richard Wakelin	Shareware
Siena Fuel	Fuel Consumption Monitor	Alan Richey	Shareware
Siena GamePak	Games Compendium	Ben Vaughan	Shareware
Siena Golf	Golf game/simulation	Steve Litchfield	Shareware
Siena Home Inventory	Home contents management	Alan Richey	Shareware
Siena Invest	Shares/portfolios manager	Alan Richey	Shareware
Siena Plus Pack	Hour/Units/Tree/Guitar/Chars	Steve Litchfield	Freeware
Siena Reader	Compressed text viewer	Barry Childress	Shareware
Siena TermIt	VT100/ANSI terminal Emulator	Serge Shestopalov	Shareware
Siena Ultimate Poker	The card game	Ian Pinkard	Shareware
Siender	Arcade shoot-em-up	Mark Wheadon	Shareware
SolPeg	Marble-jumping game	Cade Roux	Freeware
STB	Shut The Box dice game	Steve Litchfield	Freeware
Subway	Underground route-finder	Tat Tang	Freeware
Task List	Task Switcher	Phil Spencer	Freeware
Tilefall	strategy game	Adam Dawes	Freeware
Timer	Timer/countdown utility	C E Steuart Dewar	Freeware
Tube	London Underground navigator	SW Systems	Commercial
War	Strategy game	Ben Vaughan	Shareware
Xpensez	Expenses Management system	GB Software	Freeware

Useful Siena web sites:

web.ukonline.co.uk/listener/page5.html	'Listener"s Siena reviews
www.ndpd.demon.co.uk/siena/	The unofficial Psion Siena Site
www.users.zetnet.co.uk/danb/siena/	Daniel Brocklebank's Siena site
homepages.which.net/~james.phillips/siena	The unofficial Siena FAQ
www.t0.or.at/~lindi	The Vienna Siena page
www.ganz.demon.co.uk/psion	Eli Ganz's Siena page
www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Network/5315/	Richard Betts' Siena World

Using the Palmtop CD

Windows users who receive the CD should double-click on the file 'Start.htm'. On most PCs the web browser will leap into life and display the CD interface. If nothing happens, or if Windows asks how the file should be displayed, cancel the operation and install Microsoft Internet Explorer from the CD. Both 16 and 32-bit versions can be found in the 'msie' folder. After installation, try double-clicking on 'Start.htm' again.

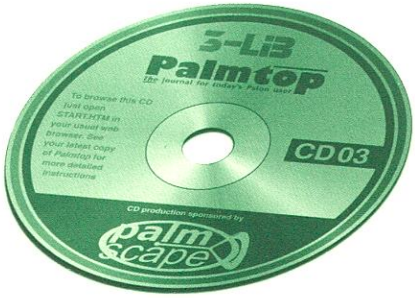
- DOS, Amiga and Archimedes owners will be restricted in what they can view on the CD, but will still be able to browse the 3-Lib library section and copy off the software as needed.

- Macintosh users should simply drag the 'start.htm' file onto their web browser, where it will load the interface just as on a PC. Those without a browser can simply load the free copy of Internet Explorer 4 from the 'msie' folder. Please note that the Psion screen saver, demos and Emulators are all designed to run on PCs, so they will not work directly on your Mac.

- PC users please note that your operating system may set all files retrieved from the CD to 'Read-only'. This shouldn't cause a problem for 99% of applications, but you may have to manually change file properties (e.g. use [Control]-[P] on the Series 5 itself) if you have problems with running or de-installing software.

- PC users who install Internet Explorer should note that it often comes with its default start page set to *www.microsoft.com*, meaning that it tries to go online. Just go into its 'options' dialog and set the start page to a file local to your computer (e.g. the *Palmtop CD* Start.htm file).

- PC users who browse the CD in Windows Explorer should note that double-clicking on a text (.TXT) file usually launches Microsoft Notepad. Although this does its best to display the text properly, text is usually not 'wrapped' correctly. If this happens for you, either use Windows 95's Quick-View facility or open the text file in a suitable word processor.



Obtaining the Palmtop CD-ROM

The *Palmtop* CD-ROM is now given FREE with all new subscriptions and resubscriptions received.

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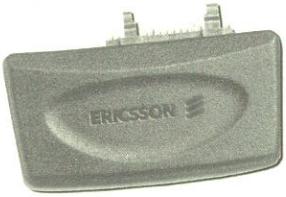

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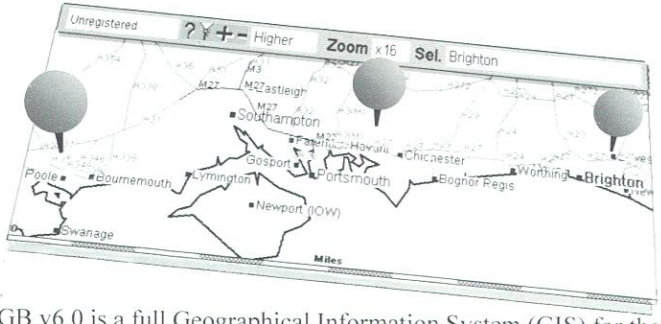

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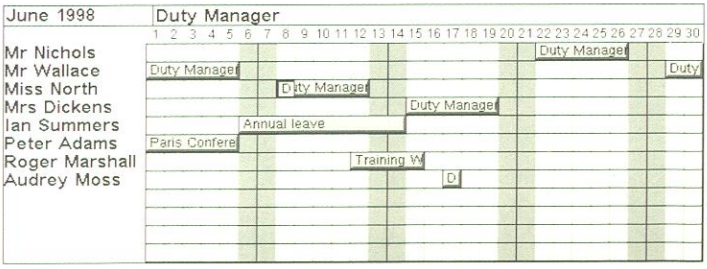

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Available from http://members.aol.com/petesipple/kallcost.htm & usual shareware sources. Email psipple@cix.co.uk for full details

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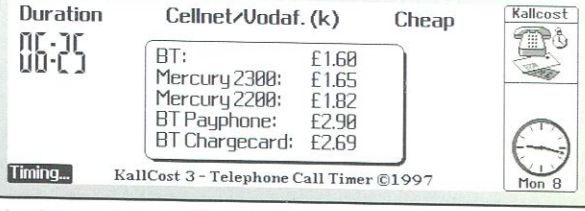

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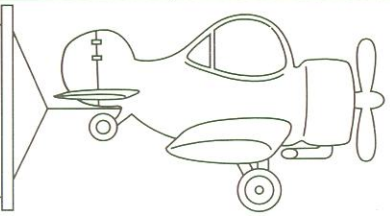

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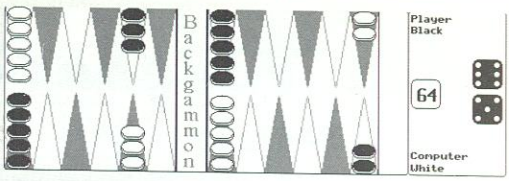

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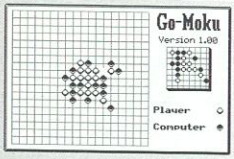

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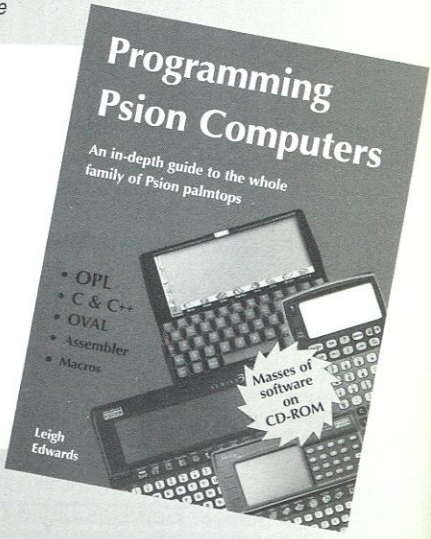

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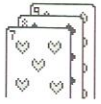

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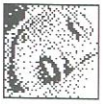

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Next issue...

Planned for issue 20:

- The history of Psion. We look at how it all started...
- Maintaining a web site using nothing more than a Series 5—we show you how
- The complete guide to faxing with your Psion 3a/3c or Series 5
- The start of a new tutorial series aimed at the more advanced user. First, we delve into SHEET on the Series 3a/3c and Series 5...
- Working for a living: the doctor
- More on Internet connectivity for Series 3a/3c and Series 5 users...
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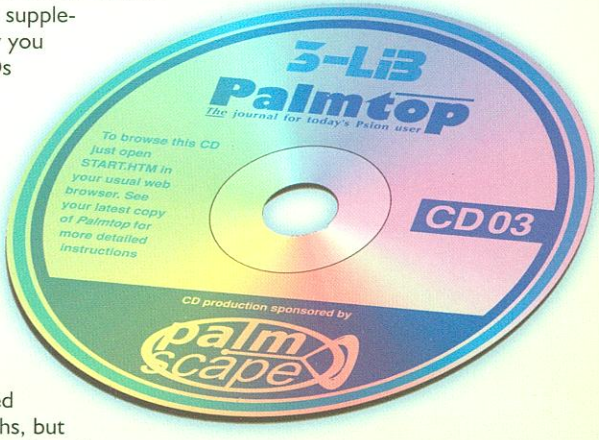
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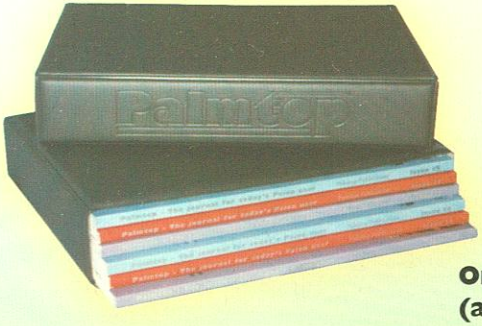

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